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Calliope

1989

Calliope

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The Offering
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SB277

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep

Yeats, "When You Are Old"

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Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting

Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality"

Genesis

Kathy Cohen

Drowning in a sea of velvet
darkness
made not of absence but of
ignorance and ignoring
struggle
faster, swimming, cling to darkness
that falls away under the hands
Grasping, struggling, kicking
lungs on fire to
Burst
into light and
draw
deep ragged breaths
pause, gather, assimilate
thoughts to still the endless inner
quivering.

The noise drones
one long single note
of never ending variety
higher
faster
louder
wilder
ageless newborn roaring

nexus *ron speir*

Hero at Large

Beckie Jackson

He is everywhere, intruding, pushing his way into every thought. I beg for quiet, solitude. I must finish my paper. "I'll be quiet," he promises, but I know not to believe him. He's made this promise before. It's not that he doesn't mean it, it's simply that he can't. He is five years old.

He is my little hero asking, "Lady, are there any bad guys in your house? I'll take care of them." And, "Do you have a husband? I will marry you."

How can I love him so much and yet get so exasperated I want to scream? When I took on this job five years ago, it was the answer to a prayer. There's been more happiness than can be measured, yet my blood pressure has risen ten points.

He is my little monster, barging into the bathroom demanding lunch, hiding while I call his name until I'm near panic. Yet he has sugar pockets on his cheeks, so sweet to kiss. Tickle him and he knots with laughter. Enough of this, I have work to do.

I retreat to the privacy of the guest room upstairs only to be followed. Climbing up beside me on the bed, he says, "I guess I'm sleepy," and proceeds to push me, asking for more room. Can he have my pen and pad to draw a picture of the sunshine and his best friend? Can I work on the floor and give him the whole bed? He wants to help me write. He cries, saying over and over, "Momma, I want to help." He slides headlong off the bed calling, "Help, help me Momma." He cries on the floor because I slid him down instead of pulling him back. I feel like a heel and worry about emotional scars.

Giving up, he goes in search of his candy cane pencil. My mind wanders back to our mornings. He wakes me at daybreak to tell me the sun is shining and the birds are singing. Sleepily, I convince him to climb into my bed and cuddle for a while. I'm hoping for a few extra minutes of sleep and he's turning into Bobby Mole, tunneling under the covers and tickling my toes.

I'm brought back to the present by the sound of his chirping as he climbs the stairs. I give him paper and he tells me not to look because he's writing me a secret. It will be a book without words. I am to make up my own story. Despite his secret, he keeps me posted every five seconds on what he's doing. He heads back downstairs and my mind starts to wander again.

He likes to wear cowboy boots, jeans, and no shirt. He once wrestled himself--much to my delight--across the living room floor, shirtless, in a pair of blue shorts and his boots.

He's back again with sharpened pencil in hand. "Don't look at my paper, look at your own, O.K.?" How I wish I could.

He barks and bounces, cock-a-doodle-doos like a rooster while I try to concentrate. He starts asking questions, tough ones. "Can you see through God?" I answer as best I can, then turn back to my writing. He interrupts me to look at his picture. He's done it very well except for nickle-sized ears on a dime-sized body. He interrupts again for a counting lesson.

Would I trade him for a more demure child? One willing to sit and watch the world? Not a chance.

Now he sits behind the rocker quietly filling a small wagon with his treasures: a bow and arrow, Raggedy Ann and Andy, and a comb. His prizes are as eclectic as he.

Out of nowhere, I am attacked by an Indian. A rubber knife follows my pen across the page, pressing me to complete my work and join in the play. The knife moves to my dictionary, slicing it into pages.

I must go. My hero has waited long enough.

like daniel
a.o. harris

like
Mischievous youths
we squandered our days
tackling the ideas
the other discovered
like
Baseball cards
we traded special pieces
of our/Selves
for the growth of the other
like
Old sneakers
withstanding the
sunny and rainy days
like champs
like
Friend/ships
are supposed to be/
                    like that.

sad circle above
a. o. harris

the small procession
of wandering birds
glance below their wings
and effortlessly hover
          in a
mournful pattern
periodically sending
shrill cries
to one another
          as if
to wonder why
the spirit below
hesitates to fellowship
with the merry band.

seeing the saddened fowl
slowly losing their aerial grace
          I lift my pen
              and shyly join in their juvenile play.

Watching Them Grow Yellow

Adam Tenenbaum

Life is very long for a ten year old, time is a good friend. So it was for Tom, who sat endlessly at his desk listening to his teacher's hum. That's all her lectures were to him, background music for daydreams. Some days he was the captain of a ship, a one-man sixty foot sailboat. Swim all day, play with the fish, and never worry about rain. Other days it was horses. Watch them run, their speed, their grace. And all too willing to give you a ride. You can go anywhere on a horse, over mountains and through streams and even to movies and shopping.

Tom wiggled in his seat. It was a warm and sunny day. The warmth made the classroom smell like old milk. It was mid-afternoon, the sleepiest part of the day. Tom had the eraser end of a pencil in his mouth and was absentmindedly chewing on it. He closed his eyes and went into a hot-air balloon. Up in the sky he went, high above the world. He stopped on a cloud and got out for a walk. He bounced on the cloud as if it were a giant trampoline. When he was hungry he simply grabbed a handful of cotton candy cloud.

Tom was chewing harder on his pencil now, as a steady stream of saliva ran down his chin. The music flowed as the teacher talked about history then math then geography, each one a different tune.

Meanwhile, Tom was kite flying on a cloud. The wind was strong and was pulling Tom along as fast as he could run. Every few steps Tom would trip and bounce off the cloud somersault fashion. But a second later he'd be back upright again. No shoes up in the clouds, feel the mist between your toes.

A puddle of spit ran down the desk and onto Tom's hand on his lap. The wetness brought Tom's attention back to the classroom. The rest of the class was already filing out the door. Tom packed up his books and headed home.

It was about a half-mile to Tom's house, but on a nice day like today the walk could take almost an hour. There is so much to see on a spring afternoon. So much to hear and smell. The beauty of pale blue robins' eggs. The smell of freshly cut grass.

When he reached home his mother was sitting on the porch smoking. "Hi, Tom, how was school? I've been waiting for you. Wanna coke? We've got to get you shoes and I'd like to leave now so we can beat the traffic. After shopping we're supposed to meet Dad at Hurley's for dinner. You like Hurley's, don't you dear?"

Because it was still pretty early Hurley's wasn't very crowded. Tom's father was a little ragged from a hard day. "That Jones deal has really turned into a regular pain. I've been running around all day. Those people don't know what they want, they don't communicate with each other. I really wish we weren't handling them at all."

"Tom," his mother said, "is something wrong with your steak?"

"Eat up," his father said, "we can't wait forever for you. I have a meeting in less than an hour." Tom just kept playing with his potatoes. He was adding more and more butter, watching them grow yellow.

Later that night, after they got home, Tom had hours to spend playing with his toys.

. . . .

"School can wait," Tom thought as he watched one of his more favorite Yogi The Bear cartoons. School didn't wait though, it went right on without him, and so Tom was late.

Tom looked at the tiles on the floor as he walked down the long hall towards his classroom. There were about five times as many light brown tiles as dark brown ones and Tom was trying his best to jump from dark tile to dark tile. This was not a new routine for Tom, and he was quite good at it. Tom entered the classroom and disrupted the class as little as possible.

Today Tom was a king. He had money, jewels, and servants. And cats, something Tom's mother wouldn't let him have even though Joey Simon had a cat named Charlie. As king Tom could do whatever he wanted, sleep, watch cartoons, eat dessert first, and never grow up. Tom the boy king.

The day went very quickly and before he knew it Tom, along with his parents, was on his way to his grandparents' house. "Do we have to stay long?" Tom's mother asked.

"No," his father said, "We'll just eat and leave. Two hours, tops."

Toms' grandparents' house always smelled funny, like a combination of chicken soup and shellac. "Oh look how big you're getting, Tom," his grandmother fussed. "You must be twice the size you were last week. Go tell your grandfather you're here, I think he's watching T.V. in the den."

"Hi Grampa."

"Oh, when d'ya get here?"

"We just came in," Tom said. "Guess what, I lost another tooth. See?"

"Did the tooth fairy leave you anything?"

"Only a quarter."

"Well, we'll see what we can do about that. Why don't you go ask your grandma for a deck of cards and I'll show you a trick."

Tom ran into the kitchen yelling, "Grandma, Grandma, Grandpa wants a deck of cards."

"Is he doing those stupid card tricks again? Here you go Tom, but don't let him do more than two tricks."

Tom's grandfather's hands were old and arthritic. They would not clinch completely, nor would they fully straighten. Shuffling the cards was a task of great effort. But it was not his hands that bothered Tom's grandfather the most, it was his mind. The intricacies of the card tricks evaded him. Not one trick could he remember fully. He thought he remembered each trick, but painfully realized at the end of each that he had erred somewhere along the way. The fact that he had no idea where he had erred served only as a source of greater irritation.

"Boy," Tom's grandfather said to him, "did I ever tell you about the time I beat fifty men in a foot race at the county fair? It was 1938, no, no, 1939. I weighed 143 pounds back then. My brother wouldn't enter the race, he knew how quick I was. Your grandmother was sitting . . ."

"Come on," Tom's father interrupted, "Dinner's ready."

Tom was glad that it was dinner time, he'd heard his grandfather's story many times before. Besides, Grandma always makes plenty of mashed potatoes to play with.

eden *ron speir*

My Thoughts
Kathy Cohen

Sometimes my thoughts
Are like a bottle of thick rich liquid
Where, when it is over turned,
A large bubble forms at the bottom
And rises:
ever-
so-
slowly-
To the top
Where it bursts quietly, slowly
Without drawing attention
Or praise.
Yet that is the most beautiful thought
The clearest, the best
But it comes so very seldom

At other times my thoughts
Are like a glass of champagne
Starting small and quickly rising
To burst
With sharptiny bangs
These thoughts draw the most attention
And make people shake their heads at me.
In every thousand maybe ten will be good.
These are my thoughts of action.

Sometimes,
Not very often,
They will be both:
A carefully planned out deep emotion
Rising to be joined at the top of my brain
By a quickly moving bubble of action.
These are my thoughts of wisdom-
My thoughts of freedom-
My thoughts of others-
My thoughts of love.

Wind, Marriage, and Mankind: Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" as Exemplary of Romantic Poetry

Stacy Hooks

'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose.
Byron

Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is not merely a tribute to the wind, but a poet's single-minded struggle to connect with the universe. To connect, to find his place, Shelley turns to that element in nature to which all others—from "leaves dead" to "sea blooms and oozy woods" far beneath the ocean—must submit. "Chained and bow'd" by the heavy weight of hours" adulthood inevitably brings, Shelley cannot freely follow the wind as in his boyhood. He realizes that the wind cannot physically release him from the confines of time, but this is not his goal. Instead, he asks the wind for intellectual release, first to "drive [his] dead thoughts over the universe . . . to quicken a new [intellectual] birth, and then, for the wind to be, through him, "the trumpet of a prophecy" to all of mankind. This prophecy is a summons for man to turn from the finite—the temporal and the physical—to the infinite—the intellect and nature. This turning away, this intellectual release, is man's apocalypse.

Although "Ode to the West Wind" reflects one poet's quest for apocalypse, it is not a novel poem; in message and method, namely that of specific image patterns, it exemplifies Romantic poetry. Like other Romantics, Shelley is acutely conscious of the moral turbulence plaguing nineteenth-century Europe, and that the corrupted ideals of the French and Industrial Revolutions are largely responsible. Realizing that established law and religion are only breeding grounds for corruption, the Romantics view man's apocalypse as a catharsis of sorts which purges the mind of secular restraints. Because they so firmly believe this, the predominant image patterns--wind and marriage--stem not from the secular and finite but from the spiritual and infinite--nature and intellect. It is by emphasizing the infinite that the Romantics hope to guide mankind to and through apocalypse.

Because it is "tameless, swift . . . proud [and] uncontrollable" the Romantics rely on the wind's "unseen presence" as a foil to the impotence and fragility of the secular world. To Shelley, the wind serves as a reminder that there exists a universal force greater than and ungoverned by the finite world of time or tyrants. From the wind's presence, the "leaves dead . . . the pestilence-stricken multitudes [of the secular world] . . . are driven." The secular world's recognition, however subconscious, of the wind's supremacy appears not only in Shelley—multitudes "are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing"—but also in Blake's "Urizen" when, after separating from Desire and Imagination, Reason "hides carefully from the wind."

Often referred to as the sky-god, the wind shows his wrath toward mankind's fallen, corrupt state. In "Ode to the West Wind," the wind, originating in that direction long associated with death—the West—brings a storm to drive these multitudes from his presence. The "black winds of perturbation" and the "whirlwinds of sulphurous smoke" in "Urizen" arise in violent protest of Reason's separation from his counterparts. Wordsworth, in "The World is Too Much With Us," feels that Europe is so corrupt, so "out of tune," that it is unmoved by the "winds . . . howling at all hours" in protest.

It is not, however, through the wind's display of power or protest, but through its absence or stagnation that the Romantics best illustrate man's temporal preoccupation and need for spiritual apocalypse. In "Ode to the West Wind," the "seeds . . . lie cold and low . . . like . . . corpses within graves" while the wind is absent. Shelley, too, before his apocalypse, is "chained and bowed" to that secular realm, unable to touch or to be touched by the wind. After the Mariner falls, shoots the Albatross in "down dropt the breeze . . . there was neither nor motion [and] the very deep did rot" in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge also stills the wind on the eve of the young maiden's corruption in "Christabel"; that night, "there is not wind enough to twirl the one red leaf." So complete is man's debauchery in Byron's "Darkness" that its stench poisons the atmosphere and the winds "wither in the stagnant air."

That the wind withers or remains stagnant is a rarity in Romantic poetry; this stagnation more commonly precedes a storm, a catharsis for man. After the autumn storm and winter in "Ode to the West Wind," the "Spring . . . blows/ her clarion o'er the earth . . . [filling] with living hues and odors plain and hill." Because such a rebirth follows death, Shelley has hope; like "the forest . . . [his]

leaves are falling," but in losing his "dead thoughts," he gains "a new birth." Though the Mariner's redemption is, ultimately, only partial, the "roaring wind" does signal his journey back to life. Likewise, in "Resolution and Independence," the "roaring in the wind all night," the accompanying storm, and "the sun . . . calm and bright," parallel Wordsworth's internal storm and eventual resolution.

Not only is the wind the "destroyer . . . preserver," and restorer, it is often the source of life to the Romantics. While "Ode to the West Wind" primarily concerns the death/rebirth, corruption/catharsis cycles of nature and humanity, Shelley does refer to the wind as the "breath of Autumn's being" and the "Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere." In "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," it is the wind that animates the daffodils; Wordsworth remembers them "fluttering and dancing in the breeze." He loves the "living air" in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," and admonishes his sister, Dorothy, to "let the misty mountain-winds be free/to blow against thee [because] in after years . . . these wild ecstasies," memories, will be a source of pleasure and comfort. For Coleridge, the wind breathes life into man, otherwise a mere "lump of clay"; this wind is "plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze/ at once the soul of each and God of all"—man is simply an Eolian harp. Byron, by contrast, reflects the diminishment of life in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Feeling less animated by, connected to the wind, Childe Harold fears that because of his increasing years, "perchance [his] heart and harp have lost a string."

Just as the wind is, ideally, connected to unified with man, the images of wind and marriage often appear connected in Shelley and Coleridge. Shelley believes that his apocalypse depends on that union, that marriage between himself and the wind. In desperation, he prays to the wind for that marriage" "Make me thy lyre . . . be thou, Spirit fierce/ my spirit! Be thou me . . . be through my lips . . . the trumpet of a prophecy." Similarly, as the wind plays over the strings of the Eolian harp, Coleridge surmises that "all of organic nature [man included] . . . be but organic harps . . . that tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps . . . one intellectual breeze." This marriage complete, Coleridge's imagination "transverses [his] brain/ as wild and various as the random gales/that swell and flutter on this lute."

This marriage imagery is not, however, always connected only with the wind; often Romantics seek a marriage of the mind and all of nature. The scope of "Ode to the West Wind" limits this marriage to the intellect and wind, but the marriage imagery is, nonetheless, present. Wordsworth says, in "Tintern Abbey," that man and nature "half create," and in the "Prospectus," he equates marriage of mind and nature with "Paradise, and groves/Elysian, [and] Fortunate Fields:

> For the discerning intellect of Man,
> When wedded to this goodly universe,
> In love and holy passion, shall find these
> A simple produce of the common day.

Coleridge's "Fears in Solitude" represents this marriage as "society . . . [which gives] a livelier impulse and dance of thought" to the mind. "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" presents nature as the faithful spouse who "n'er desert the wise and pure." Byron wants only "to mingle with the universe, and feel/ what [he] can n'er express."

Like Byron, Shelley strives to, but realizes that the poet can never "render into words and images" that vision all Romantics find themselves both blessed and burdened with. If not entirely successful, they are, through the use of "infinite" imagery, most effective.

Their versions of man's path to redemption all involve rebellion against some element in society, whether it be corrupted political or cultural revolutions, organized religion, social hypocrisy, or sexual repression or discrimination. It is that common ground, however small, of vision—vision to see man's urgent need for apocalypse—that unites Romantic poets.

What makes Shelley the consummate Romantic and "Ode to the West Wind" the model of Romantic poetry is this poet's contempt for all established customs. Arguably the first flower child, Shelley advocates the "emancipation of women, love tender and true, and that man be vegetarian, healthy, and gentle." Though he has "boundless confidence in the reasonableness of mankind," Shelley does not escape the disillusionment with a fallen, finite, and essentially worthless world to which all Romantics are prone. Caught in this disillusionment, and ironically, in a storm, Shelley drowned at age thrity.

But Shelley, like nature, is resilient, and had he lived, or if he does still live, his "ashes and sparks . . . words among mankind," then "if Winter comes [for him], can Spring be far behind?" No.

Shadows

Maureen Lucey

She sits at her desk licking stamps
To put on still more envelopes
In the office that is hers
Dreary and mundane
But for the painting on the far wall:
Of a cabin set deep within the woods
Overlooking a calm shimmering lake,
With shadows sprinkled
Carelessly across the canvas
From the day's last light.
Thoughts of her brown A-frame cottage
At the lake come to mind,
Longing to be there....
Her reverie is broken by the noise,
Then sight of the mail cart being pushed
Down the hall by Hal
His brown hair hanging down
Over his eyes, and
Funny little grin
Poking up through his heavy moustache.
They exchange mail
And the hand of a close friend
Brushes softly against hers,
Leaving an odd sensation
That somehow comforts her.
The day is almost at an end
It seems to say to her, as the dusk
Creeps forward outside of her window.

death of an age *ron speir*

Resolution

Ron Speir, Jr.

Not a day slips by
Without a thought of her.
As the tides change
I call out her name,
But only in my mind.

A million times I've spoken,
Confessing my love with words.
All in my mind, only in my mind.
But can she feel my naked heart,
Through the tangled facade?
I study the movies diligently--
How does he know when
To bear himself to her?

nature's demolition *ron speir*

I wake up to darkness,
And only the faded memory,
Of her musing face
Can enlighten the blackness,
Which envelops me.

I resolve to face her:
My hands will caress her heart,
So my arms can embrace her soul.
And I will set it all aside--
My shy, extroverted shell
with quivering lips-
Confessing to the world
The love I behold.
But when will I know when . . . ?

Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea
Thomas, "Fern Hill"

Epoch

Michele Hepner

And it was conceived. The fruit grew ripe and dropped to the ground. Juices seeped into the earth, making it fertile for the seed. The seed dropped into the land, comforted by sweet nourishment it found there. It felt the earthly pleasures the land had to offer, and with its roots delved deeper, grasping hold. The sun found the seed basking in its warmth and pulled it forward, upward, turning it green with life and lush with gratitude.

Soon the rain came, cooling the young plant's heated embrace with the sun. Placing the dew on each limb with precision, the cold water seeped into the plant, changing, pushing, spreading, branching it.

With each dew drop came a new dependent—some took its tender flesh and bore in, eating it. Some tore the lush green leaves from its palate and built their homes in its limbs. Each sang a song of loving gratitude though the tree could not hear it.

The rain turned to ice and the ice to snow; the sun disappeared behind a colorless cloud. The youth had been sapped from the tree, leaving only maturity and experience to be gained from survival. Naked of its life and forced by the season to become dormant, it grew silent and watchful, digging deeper into the land in search of nourishment.

The sun reappeared and the tree once again basked wantonly in its heat. Displaying its new maturity, it began to gather pollen from the tempest-tossed winds surrounding it.

And it conceived.

The Still Life

Kathy Cohen

Two bodies rest
a pose
caught
still as a sculpture
for a brief moment
dark shadows fill crevices
and starlight glistens
off the wet curves.
Part
and form again
new darkness and light
in neverending kaleidoscope
of contrast.

the sentinel *ron speir*

A Part

Nancy Gallaher

An imperceptible tear glistened at the inner corner of her left eye. Deenie, seated before the mirror, considered her daughter in its fluid translucency; but in her own self-conscious busyness, Nina, intuitively aware of her mother's intent and unwilling to be absorbed in the glare of that encompassing eye, shifted in her activities. Undaunted, Deenie refaced her own image and turned inward. Her eyes were a cool pale blue, seemingly detached but determined. Changeless themselves over the years, they had quietly and unobtrusively brooded over the changeless inconsistencies of life. It must be a cycle, she thought, seeming to evolve only because individual experience rendered new insights. Nevertheless, it had long been one of her most tenaciously held beliefs that the nature of one's death was consistent with the nature of one's life, that birth and death were but the visible boundaries, and that there was a pattern and purpose to each individual cycle, no matter the inconsistencies. She listened to her eyes and in their agelessness they had told her it was true. Now she herself would wait only a short while.

Her illness had not yet distorted her vision nor dimmed her eyes. What she saw there within her eyes was herself. She was the child who first realized that the reflection in the mirror was her own; she was the young woman who knew herself and imagined what others might see; she was the wife and mother who saw herself in her middle years reflected as a component of a family unit, connected to them by their needs and her own willing service. She was herself a part of life but apart through it all. In appearance changed, she, there within herself seen through her eyes and within her eyes, nevertheless, was herself. She might believe herself a puzzlement, but in the revelation of all eventual insights, a coherent unit, a piece in the purpose and pattern of life itself. She was adamant in this belief.

Orphaned at an early age, she had accepted her self-reliant persistence; setting her vision, she had methodically held the long view regardless. Her security was in herself and her willingness to persevere structured that security.

Now looking within herself, she had decided to know her place, that place of which her eyes had spoken. When she arose, her fall was sure and painful.

Consciousness was primitively sensual - an onslaught of physical sensations. Within unconsciousness, the sensations were more intensely real.

Behind Deenie's eyes the little girl reached up to touch the soft black hair falling down to cover her own. She made a pretend wig of it, trailing it beside her face as though it were her own. For the workday chores that thick black hair was always bound; its coarse but lustrous texture, hidden. But here on the front stoop, it was only the crown of her mother's beauty.

"You're so beautiful, Mama."

"All little girls think their mamas are pretty."

Deenie looked so deeply within her mother's eyes she felt herself to be at one with her again, inside and out, a part of someone else but not truly a part. Apart. She marveled at the thought of it. To be alone and yet not so. To be a part of the progression of time. Deenie shut her eyes; and with her fingertip, she stroked her mother's hair. Undistracted by her vision, she created in all her other senses a photograph which she would take with her always. Contented in her unaccustomed singular state, for she had many brothers and sisters and such times as these were seldom to be savored, she sighed deeply and relaxed, allowing the warm, earthy scent of her mother to encircle them. The arms tightened about her gently, pressing her into the sweetly soft but firm flesh. Very quietly and for her ears alone, a low pitched, rhythmical hum set up. With fascination, she flattened her ear closer against her mother's bosom and listened to the blend of her mother's heartbeat overlaid with loving music.

She needed nothing more; this moment caught in time had served her well. Often she turned here. It comforted her at those times just as it did now. The space within was so overwhelming she seemed unaware. She listened within and curled her chin down onto her chest. The rhythmic hum, the familiar tune, vied with the sound of a heartbeat, slower and slower, softer and softer until, having drawn her body knee to chest, the heartbeat stopped and all that remained was the sound of a mother's song.

Her eyes were watching her and propelling her into the unknown. Yet a strange familiarity hovered at the fringes. A translucency that wondered at her from within. She had been aware of this duality for some while but had not defined it until the eyes themselves had told her, at first in vague puzzling glimpses and intuitions but then with blatant stares until she felt herself at once exposed and overwhelmed by them and by that one of whom they spoke. They watched and waited.

Nina turned sharply the corner of Ninth and Way. The glass door yielded before her but her eyes did not. She was as before observed and unwilling. She sought the sanctuary of her reflective inner office. She fled into the busyness of her space. They only waited, willing to catch her unawares as she passed windows and mirrors, willing to remind her of the steady heartbeat of time, willing to wait for her until submissive; she accepted their dominance. There she wondered at this other self. Apart, alone, she was and yet not so. Apart she was and yet a part.

The heartbeat began at first slowly and softly; then more self-assuredly until at last it was her own. She struggled no longer against her ambivalent nature. Listening with her ear pressed against the bosom of time to the growing awareness of her total self, Nina's eye twinkled and in its translucency, an imperceptible tear voiced its silent song of life.

tones of despair *heather birkheimer*

Real Intelligence in the Good Characters of Dicken's *Hard Times*

Anne Muller

Dickens is attacked by many critics for many things, but the charge most frequently brought against him is poor handling of his "good" characters. David M. Hirsch insists that because Louisa Gradgrind in *Hard Times* is interested in art's ability to amuse rather than its "beauty or passion or power," she is, therefore, "brainless." He widens the scope of his attack and says "[S]o feeble-minded do the 'good' characters become at times that it is ultimately impossible to take them at al l seriously" (Hirsch, 371).

Mr. Hirsch is explicit about Louisa's feeble-mindedness. He is not in the case of Stephen Blackpool or Rachael, so I will have to provide examples for their brainlessness and then dismantle my own claims to make my point. Fortunately, my work won't be as widely read as Descartes', but nevertheless I am aware of the dangers inherent in this technique. Mr. Hirsch, however, was not sensitive enough to another rule of logic which is also the first rule of writing: substance over style. Certainly, his prose gallops off the page and is as memorable as the smell of a barn in summer, but by choosing adjectives for their impact rather than their aptness he has left the barn door open. Yes, there are problems with the good characters in *Hard Times* , but feeble-mindedness is not one of them. A cursory examination of their actions makes the refutation obvious. While Dickens may not have been at his best in *Hard Times* , there is much about Louisa, Stephen, and Rachael that is fascinating and admirable.

But Mr. Hirsch finds Louisa "hollow," and explains himself by using the scene in which Louisa is comforted by Sissy after fleeing from Harthouse:

> This should be a moving scene, for it suggests the power of Christian. . . love to overcome the ruin wrought by sterile materialism . . . [T]he scene . . . is actually ludicrous . . . Christian and human love is triumphant, all right. But over what? Louisa has yet to do any evil. Worse, she has yet to suffer . . . The scene is a failure because the suffering is hollow. And the suffering is hollow because the characters are (Hirsch, 371).

Mr. Hirsch's argument for the brainlessness of Louisa is perhaps best approached by his explanation of her hollowness. He finds the "frustrated females" (Hirsch, 371) a bit silly, a bit feeble-minded, because their sentiment does not seem directed against anything. Mr. Hirsch's inability to understand this scene is indicative of his inability to understand Louisa. Louisa *has* suffered:

> "With a hunger and a thirst upon me, father, which has never for a moment been appeased; with an ardent impulse towards some region where rules, and figures, and definitions were not quite absolute; I have grown up, battling every inch of the way." (Dickens, 165)

She has suffered in her struggle to find something to make her feel real, something to tell her there is a difference between life and death. To her quietly desperate "What does it matter?," her father replies "rather at a loss to understand . . . 'What matter, my dear?'" (Dickens, 77). Her mother is equally supportive, saying, "[Y]es, I really *do* wish that I never had a family. (Dickens, 42) . The love in the scene between Sissy and Louisa is triumphant over the forces that try to kill the soul; the denial of the human spirit is the evil, and Louisa has suffered through that all her life. She has done no evil. But the love is triumphant not so much over the external evil as it is over her emptiness. Her inability, then, to grasp "the beauty or the passion or the power" of art is central to Dickens' point. She has been hollow; she cannot fully know the possibilities of the spirit. What Mr. Hirsch calls her "rapid recovery" (Hirsch, 371) is not that at all; what he sees as hollow in the scene reinforces the distance she has to go. She is not feeble-minded; she is beginning to understand what it is to be human.

It is proof of Louisa's depth that despite her upbringing she can have an understanding that there is more to life than "Ologies." Louisa couldn't have been saved by Sissy if she hadn't been looking for salvation all along. At first we think she's as emptied of humanity as Tom, who says, "Except that it is a fire, it looks as stupid and blank as everything else looks." We think that the Gradgrind education has destroyed Louisa's perceptions as well when she says, "I don't see anything in it, Tom, particularly." But we see that her emptiness — her hollowness — is not brainlessness but bleak, lonely despair. "[L]ooking at the red sparks dropping out of the fire, and whitening and dying...made me think, after all, how short my life would be, and how little I could hope to do in it." (Dickens, 41) There is something especially poignant in her use of the word "would," as if she is not alive.

Yet despite her emptiness she is not self-absorbed. H.P.Sucksmith says that the scene in which Louisa is sympathetic about Sissy's father (48) "is of immense importance in the novel since it indicates Louisa's better nature." (Sucksmith, 125) Dickens titled the chapter in which this scene is found "Sissy's Progress," but it is more aptly titled "Louisa's Progress." While Louisa is becoming aware of a different reality than the Gradgrind one, Tom is displaying his inability to do so:

> Louisa saw that Sissy was sobbing; and going to her, kissed her, took her hand, and sat down beside her . . . Here Tom came lounging in, and stared at the two with a coolness not particularly savoring of interest in anything but himself, and not much of that at present(Dickens, 46-7).

Is it proof of Louisa's feeble-mindedness, then, that she marries Bounderby to help this whelp? Rather, Louisa's actions for Tom are proof of her ability to overcome her upbringing by helping and loving someone else despite her aching emptiness. She is not feeble-minded. "Louisa is a figure of poetic tragedy . . . She speaks from beginning to end as an inspired prophetess, conscious of her own doom and finally bearing to her father the judgement of Providence on his blind conceit" (Shaw, 336).

Stephen's description of the modern world is perceptive enough to make him seem a prophet as well.

> Look how we live, an wheer we live, an' in what numbers, an'by what chances, an'wi'what sameness; and look how the mills is awlus a goin, and how they never work us no nigher to onny dis'ant object — ceptin awlus, Death . . . Who can look on 't, Sir, and fairly tell a man 'tis not a muddle? (Dickens, 114)

Does Mr. Hirsch propose that because Stephen is uneducated and has a dialect that his observations are invalid? If the validity of Stephen's statement is accepted, what then is brainless about him? He suffered through his wife's abuses instead of killing her; he brought himself trouble by keeping his word to Rachael and not joining the union; he trusted Tom's motives instead of investigating the situation more. All of these actions brought Stephen only trouble and pain; are they, then, proof of his feeble-mindedness? These are all traits of honesty and decency. Is being moral in the modern world, then, feeble-minded?

Stephen, like Louisa, is saved from confusion and despair by the healing power of love. His "muddle" that so exactly captures the modern spirit is eased a little by Rachael, who has "the touch that could calm the wild waters of his soul" (Dickens, 59). Stephen speaks of the star he watched while trapped in the Old Hell Shaft: "It ha' shined into my mind. I ha' look'n at 't and thowt o' thee, Rachael, till the muddle in my mind have cleared awa . . . In my pain an' trouble, lookin' up yonder, — wi' it shinin on me — I ha' seen more clear." (Dickens, 207) Stephen is admirable for his goodness, but it is his connecting with humanity that makes him fascinating. Louisa's despair and Stephen's confusion exemplify modern alienation. The world is little improved by their salvation, but they have become more human and more at peace in a world that desperately needs these characteristics.

Stephen's savior, Rachael, does not have the traits of alienation, confusion, and despair that typify modern characters. She is, rather, timeless in her gentle ways. Her actions are least susceptible to the feeblemindedness charge. Rachael's actions of tending Stephen's wife, preventing her from drinking poison, and not marrying someone else do not display any inanity, but rather a profound humanity. Her plea to Stephen not to get involved in reform has tragic results, but her experience had been that dissent "only lead[s] to hurt" (Dickens, 252) and that the upper classes "don't know us, don't care for us, don't belong to us" (Dickens, 190). Although Rachael's plea brings death to Stephen, her connection with humanity had made his life worth living.

The one charge of brainlessness that all three are open to is their passivity. All three know the sickness of the world — it has made their lives miserable — but none tried to reform it. They lived out their lives and watched as their world "worked monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness." (Dickens, 17) Rachael had been in touch with humanity all through the novel, and Stephen and Louisa had become connected, but none tried to improve the world. Perhaps, then, after conquering the modern diseases of confusion and bleakness their spirits were killed by the true modern evil, the serpents of smoke which strangled their belief and hope in the possibilities of mankind.

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The Best Years of My Life

Carol Ann Causey

PART I

Last night I was in a bind.
I dreamt that I was attacked by my notebook.
I was held captive outside the margin and my teacher gave me an
"F" for sloppiness.
The witch.

PART II

I heard a rumor yesterday.
Somebody said I was a slow learner.
Why am I always the last one to find out about these things?

PART III

Yesterday my teacher returned my test paper.
I had studied for five hours the night before.
Anyway, I made an "A."
She drew a smiley face on it and wrote "SUPER."
Sometimes I wonder why I even bother.

PART IV

I fell asleep last period.
And now I have a large red sleeping scar on the side of my face.
My other teachers watch me suspiciously.

PART V

Today I came second runner-up in a citizenship contest.
Maybe I didn't help enough old ladies across the street.
Maybe I didn't donate enough money to the food bank.
Maybe I didn't feel enough pity for the homeless.
I don't know,
I think I'll try a different haircut.

Then and Now, or now and again

Steve Ealy

Then/now

For a moment
We share the things that are
ours.
For a moment
We share life,
Love, for a moment.

Tears fall and
Remain for a moment
To be kissed away.
For a few steps we walk
The same path,
We hold hands
For a moment.

Sharing for a moment,
For a moment
We live forever.

Now/again

If we part—
Or rather when we part
for the last time,
For part we must, finally,
Whether by death or by life—
The forever of
Our moment together
Will hold us, in
love
and in
peace,
as one.

Joy and pain: their tears
(our tears)
Which stained our cheeks
In hope and less
Now Baptize us
and
Wash our feet.

When we part, for part we must,
We die to ourselves
and are born to life
Anew.

Metamorphosis

Marcy McClendon

At some time during youth, people encounter experiences that cause us to reevaluate previously unchallenged beliefs, ideals, and aspirations. It is at this point that the lifelong process of acquiring insight into the world and the inner self begins. In literature, this point, this beginning of that process, is referred to as initiation.

It is with this theme of initiation in mind that John Updike's "A & P" and F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Ice Palace" were written. Centered around two characters in their youth, these stories unfold the events that lead to the epiphanies, the flashes of insight, that the protagonists—Sammy of "A & P," and Sally Carrol Hopper of "The Ice Palace"—experience. Through careful usage of details, Updike and Fitzgerald reveal the personalities of Sammy and Sally Carrol. Carefully calculated settings provide the appropriate conditions under which each character's lesson is learned. Sammy and Sally Carrol live in different times, different places, and different stories, yet the two are closely intertwined by both their similarities and their differences. By looking at the age, social status, ambitions, assumptions about life, as well as imagination and the changes brought about in each character, the reader sees the comparisons between Sammy and Sally Carrol.

Sammy and Sally Carrol, both nineteen years old, exemplify many common qualities of youth. Though ambitious, they are both lazy. Sally Carrol's laziness typifies that drowsy quality of the South of which she is so intricately a part. The reader infers Sammy's laziness from the statements he makes concerning the "freeloaders" working in the street, about Lengel, who "hides all day," and, most of all, in his remarks concerning the difficulty of his own job. Operating the cash register, according to Sammy, is much "more complicated than you think." Sammy, on the other hand, quits his job in an heroic effort to protect the dignity of "his girls," who have been embarrassed by Lengel. A more explicit example is Lengel's instructing the girls to leave because they are not dressed in accordance with store policy: Sammy thinks to himself that "That's policy for you. Policy is what the kingpins want. What the others want is juvenile delinquency."

Although not directly told, the reader can infer the social status of both Sammy and Sally Carrol. Sally Carrol's father is a doctor, so it can be assumed that she belongs to the upper class. In the oil paintings of her three great uncles and Harry's mention of a former classmate whom he thought was a "true type of Southern aristocrat," there is evidence of a Southern aristocratic heritage. Sammy, on the other hand, apparently belongs to the lower middle class beacuse his vision of Queenie's home and the party in her living room is a sharp contrast to the reality of his own home and social gatherings. More evidence of Sammy's social status is the assumption that Queenie's home is "a place from which the crowd that runs the A & P must look pretty crummy." The social standings, though quite opposite, provide the basis for ambition in Sammy and Sally Carrol.

Sammy aspires to climb up the social ladder to Queenie's level in society. He wants to get out of the A & P crowd and move on to bigger and better things. Though Sammy has his ambitions, to him, life is just a game. Instead of taking his job seriously, he sees the A & P as a "pinball machine," and the cash register as a piano that plays "a little song" as he punches the keys. He views the parking lot as a place where "the sunshine . . . "[skates] around on the asphalt." Although the reader knows that Sammy wants a better life, he does not know what Sammy's future plans are, or if Sammy even has any. Sally Carrol, on the other hand, knows exactly what she wants in life. Like Sammy, she aspires to be in a different place; she wants "to go places and see people . . . and live where things happen on a big scale." She does not, however, stop there. Sally Carrol has real ambition: she wants to make something of herself—she wants "her mind to grow." Her desire is to go somewhere where she feels that her energy and vitality will be useful when she is "not beautiful anymore." Closely tied to their ambitions are the illusions and misconceptions that Sammy and Sally Carrol harbor about people, and about life in general. These illusions reveal much about the protagonists' personalities and moral characters.

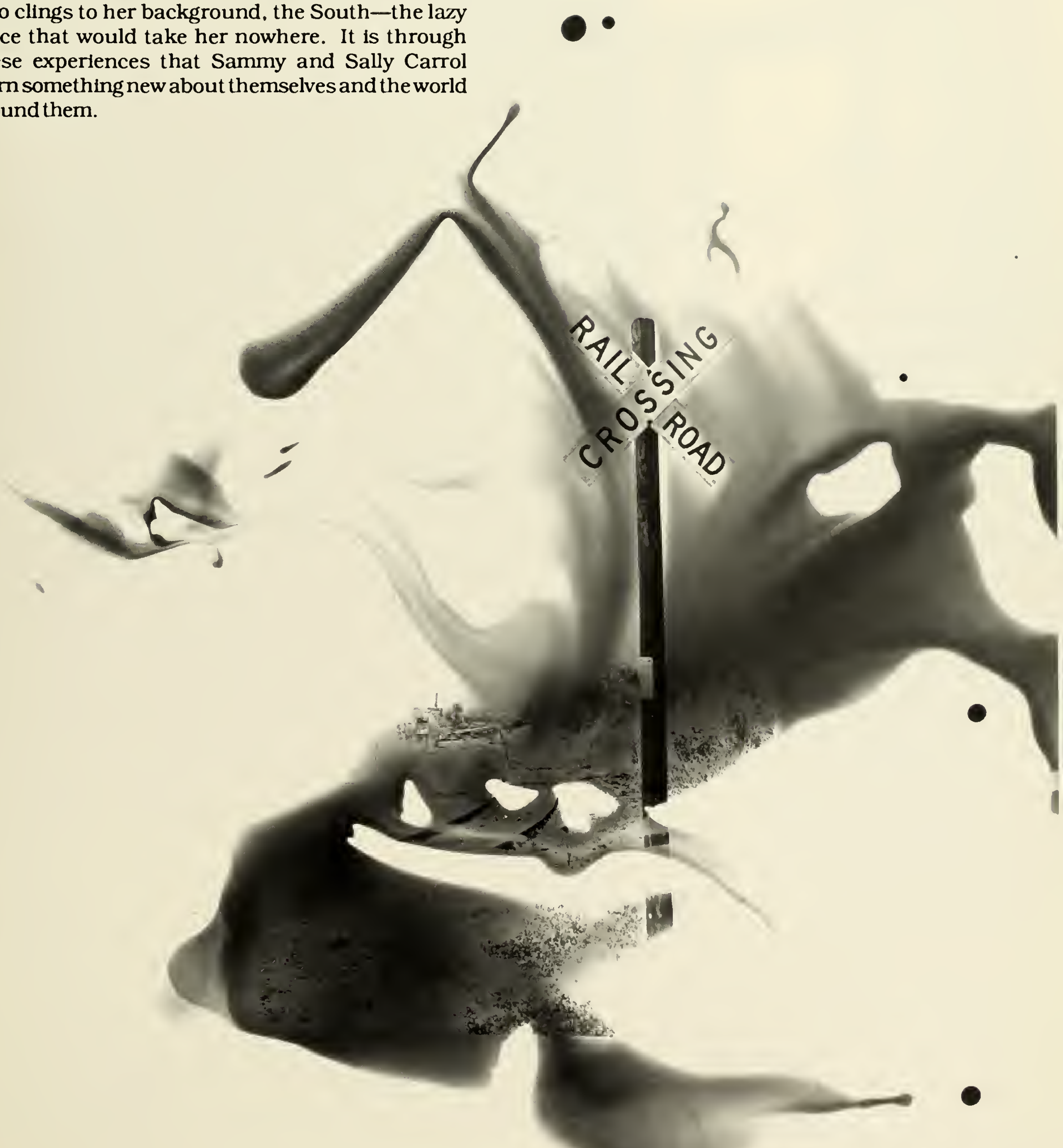
With his narrow-minded view of the world, Sammy forms his opinions of people purely on a physical basis. His outlook is superficial, and he is unable to empathize with anyone because he refuses to look beneath their physical surface. Though he likes the girls and quits his job to be their hero, he perceives them with a purely lustful eye. His description of the girls in terms of edibles is dehumanizing: he refers to Plaid's rear as "a really sweet can" and to Queenie's breasts as "the two smoothest scoops of vanilla he has ever seen." After reducing the girls to mere objects of sexual desire, Sammy attacks their intelligence: he claims that "you never know for sure how girls' minds work (do you really think it's a mind in there or just a little buzz like a bee in a glass jar?)." Sammy belittles the value of the girls' friendship by assuming that Queenie and Plaid like Big Tall Goony-Goony only because she is one of those girls they think is "striking and attractive but never quite makes it" and, therefore, poses no threat to them. As for older people, he respects them even less. Tagging them as animals and other low-life, Sammy sees them as worthless to society. The grocery shoppers are "sheep" who follow the lead of Lengel and obey his store policies. Sammy also perceives the people as "pigs" and "houseslaves in pincurlers" and the workers in the street as "freeloaders." Unable to empathize with others, Sammy cannot understand why those old "bums" buy all that pineapple juice, and he thinks that old "witch" has never had anything better to do over the past fifty years than watch cash registers.

Not only is Sammy insensitive to people's feelings, but he also has no conception of responsibility. As Sammy says, as far as he can tell the only difference between Stokesie and himself is that Stokesie is married and has "two babies chalked up on his fuselage." In Sammy's eyes, children are merely scores of manhood. However, he views motherhood as a loss of femininity; mothers are "women with six children and varicose veins mapping their legs." This image contrasts sharply with his view of Queenie's "prima-donna legs." Young, single, attractive girls are apparently the only useful people to Sammy, and even they appeal only to his physical senses.

Sally Carrol in no way possesses the purely superficial and narrow-minded illusions that Sammy reflects. Judging people by their personalities, Sally Carrol exemplifies a much broader outlook on life. She does, however, have certain illusions about Harry and the North. As far as she knows, Harry has "everything she [wants]." She admits to Roger Patton that she is "the sort of person who wants to be taken care of after a certain point," and with Harry, she feels sure she will be. He is the key to the adventures she longs to have in the North, which she believes to be a place "where things happen on a big scale"—a place of fun and excitement where she can use her energy. Like Sammy, however, she does classify people into categories and refers to them as inanimate objects. She perceives Mrs. Bellamy as "an egg," who "[typifies] the town in being innately hostile to strangers." In contrast to the charming Southern women, the women of the North appear to be "glorified domestics." She also has formulated a unique system of categorizing people as either feline or canine, felines being subtle and canines being aggressive.

Both Sammy and Sally Carrol possess vivid imaginations. We see Sammy's imagination when he slides "right down [Queenie's] voice into [her] living room," and pictures her parents having a delightful little party where the guests are dressed up and the drinks have olives and mint sprigs in them. Sally Carrol's imagination places much less emphasis on money and social status and much more on age and sentiment. She admires the Civil War's "unknown" dead as well as its heroes, and, most of all, Margery Lee. She holds a depiction of Margery Lee in her mind of how she must have looked and acted. Her attachment to these people reflects not just her love for the South but also her romantic associations with the time of the war—"that old time that [she's] tried to have in her."

All of these qualities lead to the eye-opening experiences which change both protagonists. Sammy's moment of enlightment comes after he quits his job and realizes "how hard the world [is] going to be to [him] hereafter." Sally Carrol's illusions are gradually melted away, ironically, by the ice and cold of the North. As soon as she reaches Harry's home in the North, she begins to realize that neither the place nor Harry will turn out as she had previously expected. Alone in the ice palace she knows "she couldn't be left [there] to wander forever--to be frozen, heart, body, and soul . . . she was a happy thing . . . she liked warmth and Dixie. These things were foreign." She realizes that she cannot remain in the North to be buried "with snow on her grave . . . Her grave—a grave that should be flower-strewn and washed with sun and rain." Only at the end, when she awakens to "blurred rays converging toward a pale-yellow sun" does she make her decision to return home to the South. Unlike Sally Carrol's illusions which are unveiled throughout the story, Sammy's misconceptions are never destroyed by any shock in revelation that Queenie will someday have varicose veins , or that the girls are really poor. Another difference in the protagonists' experiences lies in the realization of their mistakes. Sally Carrol realizes that to marry Harry would be the greatest mistake of her life; therefore, she returns to the South. Though Sammy senses his mistake before he makes it, he feels that "once you begin a gesture, it's fatal not to go through with it." It is in this instant—precisely the wrong instant— that Sammy clings to his background and moral teachings and "policy"—the very thing that caused him to quit his job. Sally Carrol also clings to her background, the South—the lazy place that would take her nowhere. It is through these experiences that Sammy and Sally Carrol learn something new about themselves and the world around them.



lapse in reality *ron speir*

Nothing was, nothing will be, everything has reality and presence

Hesse, Siddhartha

Winner of the 1989 Lillian Spencer Award for the Best Work in Calliope

Life List

Donald L. Robinson

Playing baseball on hot asphalt streets
Trying to find God at the Goodwill Baptist Church
Susie Miller, my first crush
Mandatory crew cuts in school
Wrinkled English teachers
Daddy beating momma when he was drunk
Playing trumpet in the school band
Moving to a new town
Leaving my friends

The loneliness of being the new kid in the neighborhood
My first joint on my 13th birthday
The strange taste and feeling of my first kiss
Beatlemania
Vietnam starting
Daddy beating me when he was drunk
Playing guitar in "The Baby Monkees," my first band
Wondering about the future
Ninth grade graduation prom

A scared 16 year old high school sophomore
Mescaline, Acid, THC, and pot to keep a good buzz
Colonel Agud catching me in bed with his daughter
Woodstock
Protesting Vietnam
Daddy didn't matter anymore
Trying to learn all nineteen minutes of Alice's Restaurant
Worrying that my girlfriend was pregnant
"Take a Walk on the Wild Side" as our senior prom song

Marrying my pregnant girlfriend
Using food money for pot
Slapping my pregnant wife
April 4, — the day my daughter Natasha was born
Arguing about money, about everything, about nothing
Drinking like my father
No time for music
Fighting my own youth
Needing someplace to grow up

Drafted for Vietnam
The 18 hour flight to hell
Napalm burning villagers down to the bone
Agent Orange killing everything
Platoon members going home in body bags
Thai-sticks and Australian love joints
Two tours playing hide and seek with Charlie
The Dear John letter half-way through the second tour
Going home without losing my mind or any part of my body

Mustering back into civilian life
Welding to pay alimony and child support
Alimony ending when my estranged wife drowned
Natasha coming to live with me
Learning about life from a 5 year old's view
Playing hide and seek for fun instead of survival
Singing her to sleep
Sobering up because I scared her when I threw up or passed out
Growing up because I had to

A 28 year old college freshman
Starting every day sober and drug free
A crush on the dark-haired girl in my creative writing class
Flashbacks
Wrinkled English professors
Coaching a little league baseball team
Helping Natasha with her math homework
Praying she survives
Doing all I can to help her

A Dream on the First Day the Sun Shone

Kathy Cohen

The water rushes
Past the rocks
Silvery shiny slipping streams
Gold and green glint
Like the words which fall through the
Golden bubbling wine and from your lips in
Streams of silver dreams
Floating through my mind
Around the tree where
Underneath we once made love
In the ever changing autumn leaves
Past the dusky room with the orange flaming fire
Shadows cuddle for warmth as
Drifting purity outside the window blows
Tiny drops of ice now melting to shining spring
Bubble to the front of my mind.
Sitting here in the gleaming sun and watching —
You work
So near
You blink your eyes slowly, lazily in the brightest glow
Like a large cat content
With the sun
The stream
And me.

The joys left on one window-sill.

a. o. harris

I wish we were still there
in those same flea market coats
and used fedoras
dreaming aloud over black coffee
and generic brand cigarettes
wishing the room was still open
with small mattresses pushed into unpainted corners
fighting for recognition
with scavenged art gallery posters
hidden amongst a sea of newspaper clippings
and Marley's priceless smile
wishing the window was still there
giving the bustling street
Where the neighboring ghetto children
play and learn
back to us
our aspirations
and our poems.
black coffee
cowboy cigarettes
and that room.

Torch of Freedom

Jason El-Habre

The five years I spent away from home gave me a chance to reflect on the changes that my country went through since I saw it last back in 1975. Many people had died, families had separated, and the worst had come when the country divided into states that everyone had depended on before. Throughout these mini civil wars, I survived in a little roof apartment of a high-rise building that was located in the center of the busiest streets and near a famous square where the Lebanese martyrs statue stood in Beirut, the capital.

On the apartment's balcony I had the best times with my friends, discussing our timid secrets while watching parades and celebrations live even before they were shown on the news. From behind the rails of this balcony I used to view some of the neatest looking streets in the world. Blinking commercial signs were planted and overlapped randomly on every wall and corner with different colors and patterns. On an adjacent high-rise I could see Pepsi's largest bill-board with its enormous letters, almost blocking a complete floor and flashing a different color every minute like a chameleon. Hundreds of signs made it look like Christmas lights blinking endlessly.

At the center, among all these signs, the square of martyrs was founded. Every Lebanese recalls the history of the square where fifteen people were hung, including one woman, by the French rulers who governed Lebanon just before its independence. These freedom fighters sacrificed themselves for the liberty of their people; thus the martyrs statue was erected for the people by the new government and the allied French individuals who admired the courage of these brave men and women. The first man of the fifteen figures in the statue stood in the center and raised a torch that illuminated life to a new generation.

Under the statue the engineers buried a huge clock in the ground. Its hands were rotating over a bed of flowers that were freshened by sprinklers at dawn. Sometimes, in early mornings, I could see the water drops trapped between the leaves reflecting the first rays of the rising sun, giving people an excuse to start a converstaion. By this time, merchants' shouts were already traveling through the neighborhood, flowing like a stream, and announcing the start of the busiest hours of the day. When Big-Ben would strike midnoon, people covered the sidewalks, heading indifferently like sheep to their destinations. The cars floated on the streets bumper to bumper and side to side, and moved slowly but constantly, covering every space all around the square.

In addition to the good times, bad times flashed through my mind. The last day before I left the country, I remembered that the taxi broke down about a half mile from the airport, and I had to walk loaded down with suitcases to catch my flight. Then five years later I came back to visit. Dramatic changes marked the small country and paralyzed its progress. It was in the early eighties and everything had become colorless and sad. The square had been transformed into a battle ground that separated the sites of the square witnessing the harshest fights that it had ever seen in its history. It was almost like a photo with its deep motionless and sovereign silence. The streets, or what were left of them after the bombing, were all deserted. The buildings were terribly shelled; bullet holes had chipped the stucco and burned what was left of it. There were no signs of civilization anymore; even signs for commercial stores were knocked down and melted to the metal. I could hardly see an object that stood without some shrapnel cutting its very core. The eighties had become more serious than what the people had expected and their fate was driving them to certain misery. The Pepsi sign had taken on one rusty, monotonous color. Some letters were blown away by missles and what were left were hanging precariously on the board waiting for the wind to turn them loose.

At the center of the square, barricades and sand-bags made new landmarks dividing the city in the middle. I could no longer see the other side of the square. Cement walls blocked the main entrances that led to the center of the capital. The martyrs' square was overrun by the high grass. Ivy curled around the martyrs' feet. The torch had been the target of a barbarous ugly act, and the shrapnel shredded the monument of the independent heroes. Dust and ashes clustered everywhere even on top of the clock. Apparently time had stopped at eight-twenty p.m. when a malicious hand tore it up with a grenade. The hands were bent and pointed toward the sky, helplessly pleading God to stop the agony and the killing of more innocent people.

A strange silence governed the old neighborhoods. All movement was strictly military. I noticed a couple of guys in their green fatigues on guard duty stationed behind a shelter of stacked burnt cars. Behind this guard-post I saw the M.P. jeeps zooming back and forth collecting and delivering data and ammunition. I strolled further dowm looking for the building where I used to live. Half way down the block I found out that the building was located on the other side of the barricades, and it was too dangerous to cross to it. A sudden flash-back brought me to the good-old-days where there was no spite and dullness to extend with its black cape and shadow the martyrs' square.

Disappointment and melancholy accompanied me on my way back. I was comparing the harmony that governed this country for almost a half of century before the civil wars with how uncertain and depressing life had become. Ten blood-stained years with no solution in sight. Sadly, all the efforts had failed to keep Lebanon as a whole country and one people. Despite the changes, the Lebanese people remain undaunted and continue to live amidst the strife. They are looking forward to meeting the savior who will suppress the oppressor and bring happiness to the needy. They await the time when the cloak will be lifted, when the martyrs' torch burns again, and the cloak begins a new era with peace and freedom for everyone.

iron outlook

heather birkheimer

Standing on the Beach

Lisa Gunderson-Catron

While I undressed, the wind beat against the pane demanding to be let into the room. I pulled the curtains closed to answer its demand and crawled under the covers. On the nightstand, the candle flickered, but still burned brightly. I rolled onto my side and watched its varied hues of red as outlined in the dark. As I slipped off to sleep, the candle waned and appeared to die.

I stood on the sand while the noon sun hung in the sky. Looking into the sky, I saw no clouds, only an endless pale blue broken by a ball of flames. I leveled my gaze to the horizon in front of me and all I saw was the endlessness of a cold blue sea. I turned, and my eye saw nothing except a sea of golden sand stretching off into the horizon. I turned around again and watched the frigid blue reach out and touch the warm golden sea. Looking over my left shoulder I saw a figure in black walking on the edges of the two seas.

As he came closer, I lifted my hand to my eyes to shield them from the sun which had moved to the west. He continued toward me in his measured steps straddling the median between sand and sea. As he drew closer, I made careful note of his garb. On his left foot was a boot of shiny black leather with buttons climbing up his ankle. The mate reflected the two o'clock sun under the water. His trousers were of black wool and seemed not prickly but moving as if each fiber was a separate living organism.

He drew closer to me, still moving with his assured stride down the division of blue and gold. The overcoat was made of the same rough black fabric as the trousers. The shirt he wore under the carmilion vest was of the purest white linen, while the black tie appeared to be silk and in the tie was a ruby stickpin. The ruby was set in silver and it reflected the late afternoon sun changing the yellow glow into a crimson fire. It burned its image in my mind.

Looking quickly up from the pin, I encountered the eyes of the man in black. They stood out in his pale pox-scarred face and were framed by a pair of arched ebony brows. Twilight hung in the air as he approached me still continuing his even gait. When two feet away he fixed me with his eyes. They were nothing but empty black orbs that gave nothing but took everything. He seemed to stare through my person but acknowledged my presence as he walked in front of me. With the particles of light left in the air, I could barely distinguish his dark form as he lifted his smoke stack hat to me and smiled a hollow smile as empty as his eyes.

"Good evening to you, sir," he said replacing his hat on his head. He passed me, still walking in his measured loping strides. I stood in black emptiness.

He continues down the shore merging sea and sand, blue and gold. He continued his stroll in his measured walk following the sun east to west.

antithesis

stacy hooks

Gabriella

Catherine Yagecic

As I rushed my three children out the door for a trip to Tijuana, I had no idea that a Mexican child was about to change our lives. We were headed across the border to the little town to get estimates to have a new paint job for our car. I hadn't wanted to take the children, but we were unable to find a babysitter. Tijuana had all the charm and allure of a different culture, but the part of town we were going to this time offered exposure to things that I preferred to shelter my children from. I like to take the children when we go shopping in Tijuana. Tess, my five-year-old daughter, is impressed with the way I can speak enough Spanish to haggle with the local merchants over prices on items that are already inexpensive. We also love to dine on rock lobster at a diner where the window tables offer a view of seals begging for the fisherman's catch. Today, though, we were going to a less interesting section. We were going to Camino del Autovon, where the people from the country get off the bus to go into town so they may beg from the tourists. The bus is the only assistance offered by the Mexican government to the poverty-stricken. It is a sad sight to see women with their children begging for whatever one might be gracious enough to give. It was here that I met Gabriella.

As we approached Camino del Autovon, the managers of the paint and body shops waved and called to us to come to their shop. Each of them had examples of their work on display and was ready to enter a debate over the value of a new paint job. Tom, my husband, wandered off to collect a few appraisals and Tess, Tommy, and Andrea stayed with me in the car. We watched the people. It didn't take long for the children to become bored and begin to complain. I had noticed a lemonade stand so when Tom returned, I took Andrea and walked over to get refreshments. While I waited for my order to be filled, Andrea began to squirm. When I turned to investigate her discomfort, a little girl was reaching for Andrea's flaxen hair. The girl looked innocent enough, but her torn clothing resembled that of the street people back home. Her hands were filthy and I didn't want all that dirt all over my baby. I told her she couldn't touch the baby because she would get her all dirty. She quickly ran away. My order was ready now, so I gathered everything up and returned to the car. Just as I settled Andrea back into her seat, I heard "Senora, Senora, lavo, lavo!" Sure enough, here was the little girl again. This time, she had clean hands. She peered into the car and saw Tommy, who, at two years old, had the most beautiful, straight, yellow-blond hair that I had ever seen. The little girl was equally impressed. Her eyes lit up into a brilliance that only displays pleasure. She smiled, then squealed with delight. Then like a hawk attacking his prey, she ran to his window, reached in and fondled his hair. The locks fell through her fingers and she seemed to shudder with excitement.

Her next discovery was the Barbie that Tess had brought with her. The smile told how little exposure she had had to dolls. Trying to cross the language barrier, she pointed to herself and said "Gabriella," then she pointed to each of my children and asked their names. Once the introductions were taken care of, all the children played. Their laughter penetrated the air like sunshine on a rainy day. On the way home, Tess was full of questions. She wanted to know more about Gabriella. She could not understand why she wore clothes that fit so poorly. She could not comprehend the poverty. While I prepared for the return trip the following Saturday to have the car painted, Tess came to me with a package which was wrapped in a child-like manner in newspaper. She asked if I would give it to Gabriella. I asked her what was inside. "Oh mom, just some clothes I don't need anymore and a Barbie with a pretty outfit."

I couldn't find Gabriella that day. I looked for hours. A little girl about the same size had a tin cup in her hand. I gave her the package. I never told Tess. She had only wanted someone less fortunate to have those things. It didn't matter if her name was not Gabriella.

Autumn

Kathy Cohen

The leaves swirled through the air
Brightly colored dried up dancers
Performing their farewell dance
In the gray sky.

The green-gray moss hanging
From gnarled knotted branches
Sway and blow like and old man's beard
Caught in the wind.

They gray fog covered even the
Smallest rays of the sun trying
To break through and touch the
Dying ground.

geechee christmas *ron speir*

Ducks on a Pond

Adam Tenenbaum

The room was a mess. I had meant to clean it, but I just never seemed to get around to it. It felt so nice to sit around and do nothing, which, at the moment, seems to be all I ever do. I'm not exactly someone who needs something to do to be happy. I was looking forward to going home for Christmas soon. I am someone who needs something to look forward to. When I went home I looked forward to coming back. I was sitting against the wall, next to the radiator. I had the lights out, so the only lights in the room came from a lamppost shining through a window. I was leafing through an art book. I don't really know where I got it. It had just been sitting in my room for some time. I had finally picked it up and decided to look through it. I was stuck on one page with a painting of a small lake. There were three ducks on the lake, each with a small wake extending from behind it. I held the picture up to the light then brought it back down to my lap. The lake closely resembled a lake I had liked when I was little.

The lake was at the bottom of a hill. The hill was just big enough so that you couldn't see what was atop it from the lake. Actually, it wasn't really so much the hill was raised as that the lake was sunken. Atop the hill, or above the valley, was my Sunday School. Which was exactly what I called it, Sunday School. It was a good-sized building, fairly new, built in my lifetime. It housed many classrooms, from first grade up to tenth.

The principal was a young man in his late twenties. He always carried a movie camera with him. He liked to come in and film classes. He'd insist that everyone act perfectly normal. That's all I ever saw the man do.

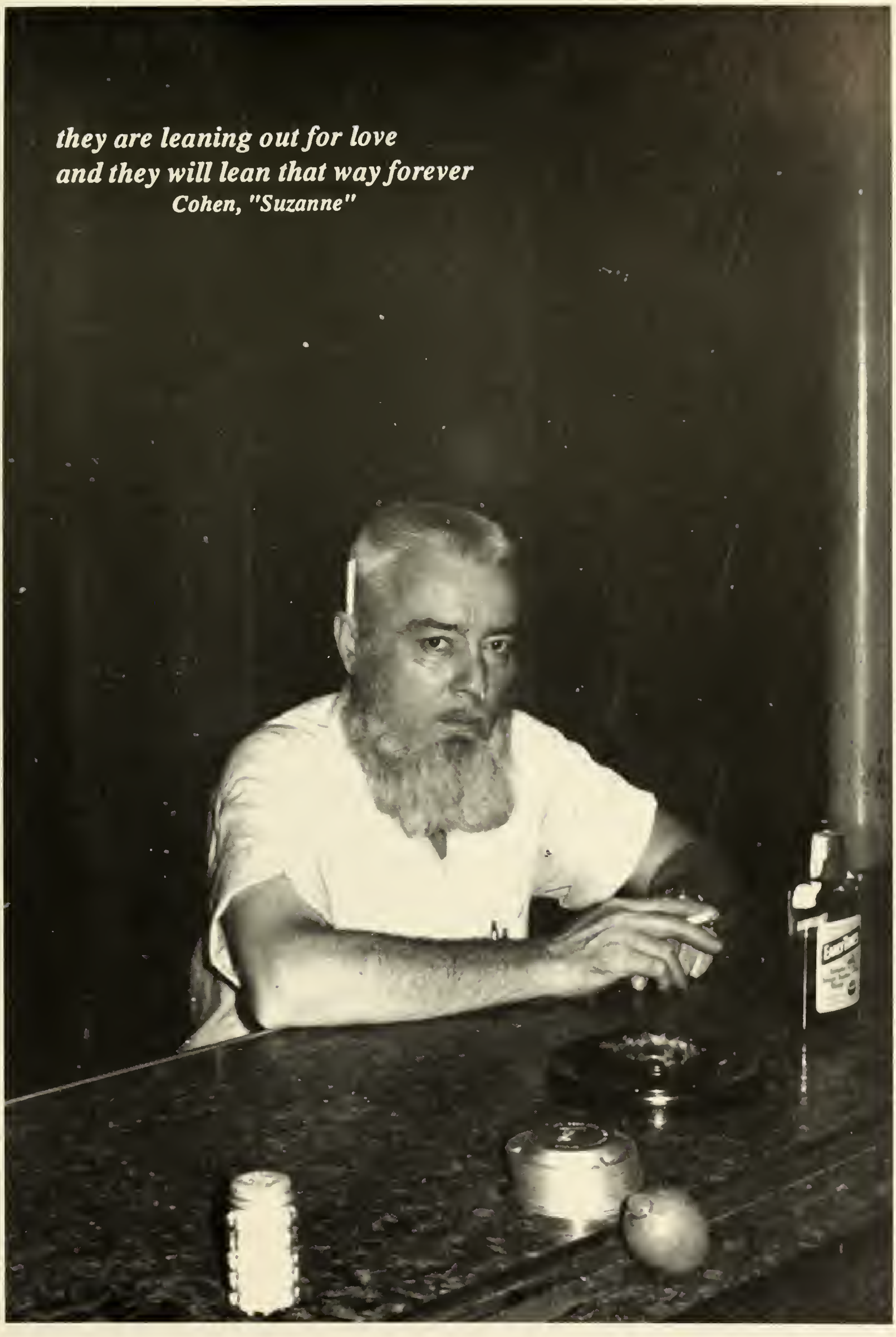
After class and during breaks, most kids would go out and play in this playground. Either that or throw snowballs at cars, depending on the weather. Not me. I spent my time at the lake. It was so nice and quiet. You couldn't even see or hear another kid.

There were always a few ducks on the lake. Big brown ducks with a black heads and green collars. Healthy ducks. And lots of tall green and yellow grass, like wheat.

I remember my fifth grade quite well. I'd walk in the door and pass the monthly-updated graph of how much had been collected to complete the proposed two milion dollar expansion. The expansion would give us more cubic feet of space than any other non-profit organization in the land that had been the Louisiana Purchase. I sat in the back of the class. I rarely said anything. I was a quiet kid. Not many others were quiet. They wouldn't kick you out no matter what you did. Once, in the spring, the class was really acting up. The teacher was trying to keep her cool, but when a student threw some chalk she flew off the handle. She demanded that if anyone had anywhere else they wanted to be they should leave. I think I surprised everyone when I got up and left. I was always such a good student.

I went out and sat by the lake. I sat and watched the ducks. I sat for a long time. It was the last time I ever saw that lake.

I closed the book and started to cry.



they are leaning out for love
and they will lean that way forever
Cohen, "Suzanne"

a poem. this is not.

a. o. harris

I haven't written in a long time
        but a poem, this is not.
The feelings have left a mark
upon my chest
suns go up and down
seeing me searching for rest
for peace
        and sadness sees my anger rhyme
        time and time again I refuse
        to write a poem, this is not.

Sitting under a tree in full shade
I saw the difference in Nature
and Man
as trees swayed, cardinals played, a cricket stood
upon my ankle and did he look up at me
as to ask
        what creature art thou under our tree?
and the ants ignored to obstacle
and continued to labor
in the tiny pebbles
of white
        I still didn't write it down, this poem is
not a poem
        to me.
Taking paper and pen to the sea
with me in high expectation of reaching
back into me, into past, into experience
        and write a poem
        I failed and continue to do so now
as I decide whether or not to write this poem, is
not a poem
        but a mind spilling Paint
wasting colours, moods, time, feelings,
                        deciding not to write this poem.

A Long Night Out

Adam Tenenbaum

I'm tired, my head hurts,
And I still don't know anyone
But still I drink
Things are getting fuzzy
The fat girls don't seem so fat
And it's getting hard to think
A guy sitting alone in the corner
Gives me an
"I'm superior to you" wink

Fat, Fat, Fat, I say out loud
As I catch myself
Staring at a fat girl
My bill will be a
King's ransom to pay
And my bladder is almost full

The bathroom's packed
And I wish I could
Just pee in this jerk to my left's hat
The waitress asks if I need another
I just nod
Nod, Nod, Nod, Fat, Fat, Fat

I sit with my hand
Protecting my genitalia
I've been like that all night
If I can protect my genitals
And avoid the fat girls
I think I'll be alright

Aylmer and Young Goodman Brown: Two of a Kind

Cindy Halas

The conflicts with which fiction concerns itself are of many kinds: conflicts within a single person, conflicts between man and society, conflicts between man and nature, and so on. Each of Hawthorne's two stories, "The Birthmark" and "Young Goodman Brown," deals with a conflict within a single man. Young Brown is unable to bear the insight into man's sinful nature, and Aylmer is unable to accept imperfection. Both characters have an idealized, rather than a realistic, view of human nature. Both represent conflicting currents, both are unstable, and both make decisions which lead to great misfortune. In both stories, Hawthorne attempts to draw moral lessons or intentions, as he has both characters trying to solve the mysteries of the human heart and the question of evil.

The settings in both stories do not merely serve as physical backdrops, but also function to set the emotional and spiritual condition of the characters. The actual geographic location of "Young Goodman Brown" is, however, more important to that story than is the location of "The Birthmark." In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne sets the mood by describing young Brown and the wicked forest into which he is about to enter. In the first paragraph, we are introduced to the story's title character, we are informed that he has a young, pretty wife, and we are told that they live in a village named Salem. The word "village" indicates the historical setting; it takes place before Salem became a city, and at a time just before witch trials were prevalent throughout the area. Finally, we are informed that Brown is going on a trivial errand or a long journey. This setting creates an atmosphere of gloominess and impending evil.

Hawthorne sets the atmosphere in "The Birthmark" in the first paragraph with this statement:

> The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart might all find their congenial ailment in pursuits which, as some of their ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force and perhaps make new world for himself.

The setting in "the Birthmark," like the setting in "Young Goodman Brown," gives the reader an immediate sense of a coming evil. However, the settings are not entirely alike. In "Young Goodman Brown" the physical scene is important to the plot, whereas in "The Birthmark" the geographic location is mentioned merely to establish a period of time in which the scientific knowledge is expanding. Both settings encourage speculation and anticipation of what is going to happen. Aylmer is presented as a "man of science," one who is interested in "spiritual affinities." The physical environment, that of Aylmer's laboratory, is extremely important to the plot and to the character. Hawthorne uses this setting to reveal the intention of Aylmer, which is to remove the unsightly birthmark from his wife's face. The threatening mood of the setting is established when Aylmer, referring to the birthmark, states that "No, dearest Georgiana, you came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature that this slightest possible defect , which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty, shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection."

Another difference is found in the attitudes of the two men. In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne has young Brown leave his wife with the "good intentions of returning to follow her to heaven." His love for her appears to be sincere, and he feels that what he is about to do in the forest will "kill her." In contrast, Hawthorne has Aylmer debating with his wife the issue of her imperfection. He cannot live with her blemish and plots to remove it. This suggests, although he says he loves her, that his love is a superficial one, a love of beauty rather than of person.

The major characters in both stories, as in many of Hawthorne's writings, are depicted as men who are trying to find a hidden self—men who are trying to solve the mysteries of their minds. Both Aylmer and Brown are concerned with their problems, and both decide to explore the unknown to ease their minds. Similar as they are in underlying aspirations, these two characters are oddly different. They represent two different forces: Aylmer is an intelligent, capable, well-known scientist who will go to any extreme to satisfy the cravings of his mind. Brown is simply confused over values of right and wrong. Brown sees himself in relation to his surroundings, to the people of the town, and to his wife. He is especially concerned with the hypocrites of the church and the wickedness among people. Behind this is the notion that Christians should have moral standards. One is either a Christian or a sinner. Brown sees his wife as an angel or a devil, not as a woman. When he sees her in the forest among the sinners, he takes an extreme position by saying, "Come, devil, for to thee is this world given." Not able to accept a mixed view of human nature, he sees the world the same way he sees his wife.

In almost complete contrast, Aylmer sees himself as an accomplished scientist, capable of defying nature itself. His view of possessing power over the spiritual world does not stem from any religious belief. Unlike Brown, he is not concerned with wickedness or what is right or wrong. He is concerned only with the ugly mark on Georgiana's face.

Faith and Georgiana, wives of Brown and Aylmer, have much in common. They are both young and beautuful, and know it and both are devoted to their hisbands. Faith, as we are told, is aptly named, but a weakness in her character is evidenced by her presence among the sinners. The details of the ribbons in her hair, combined with her prettiness, make us suspect that vanity is a quality of her character. Like Faith, Georgiana is vain. Committed to fulfilling her husband's desires, particularly the desire for perfection, she agrees to risk her life to become perfect in his eyes. Both Faith and Georgiana display weaknesses. Faith's weakness is joining the sinners, and Georgiana's weakness is in submitting to her husband's will for "beauty's sake."

The two Hawthorne stories share another common element: each is based on an incident that takes place in a short period of time. In "Young Goodman Brown," the plot deals with a single night in Brown's life—the night he spent in the forest. The plot begins with Brown's encounter with a strange man who had been expecting him. In the forest, where he is led by the stranger, Brown is maddened with despair at finding a series of sinners. He finds that virtually the entire population of Salem, including the most respected citizens, has come to take part in the ritual of the devil worshippers. The "Devil's" comments make clear that he has friends and followers throughout New England: "There are all whom ye have reverenced from youth . . . Yet, here are they all in my worshipping assembly."

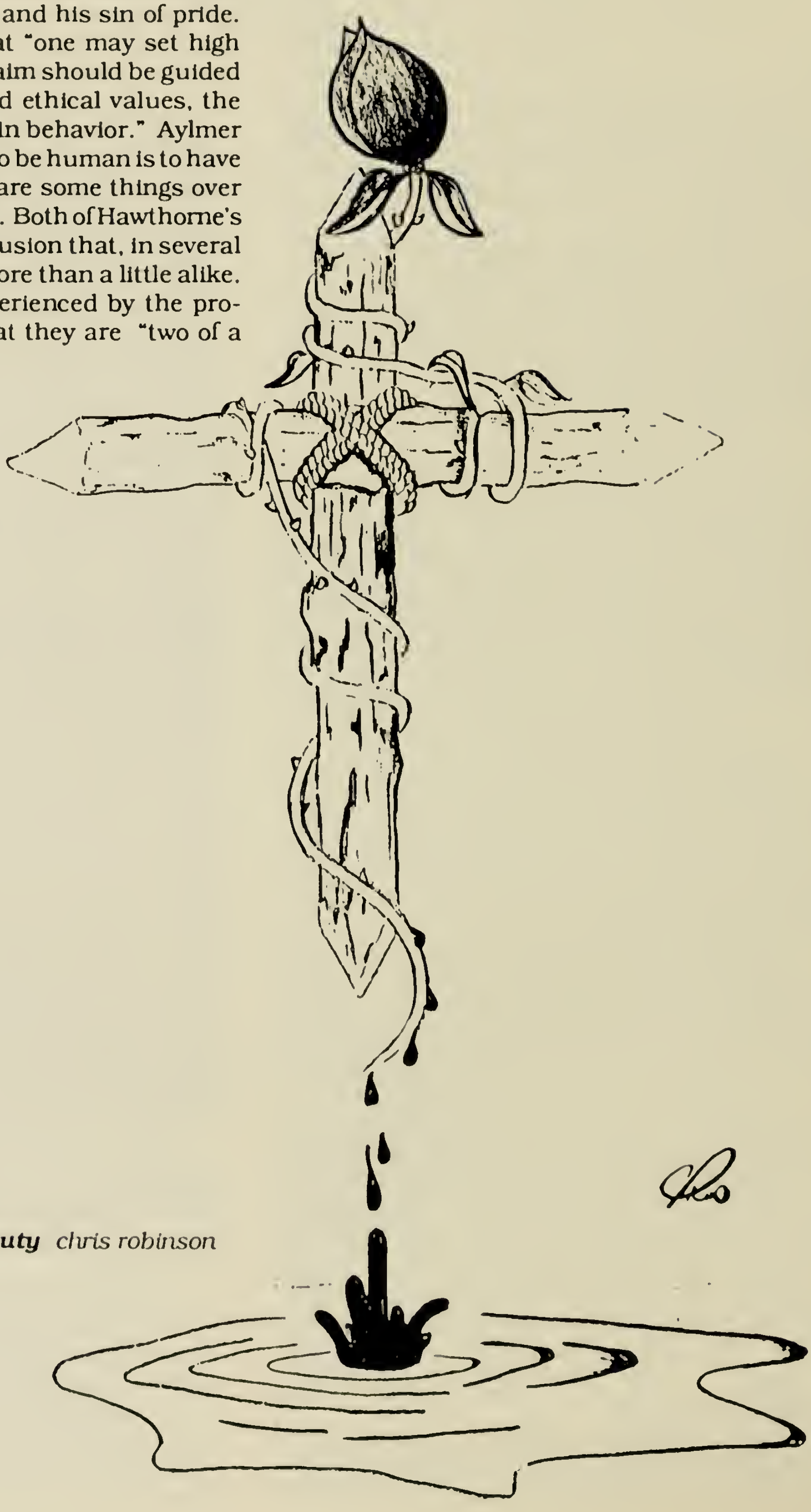
Brown's attempt to resist the will of the "Devil" begins the conflict. The highest point of intensity is reached when the "Devil" leads Brown to his diabolical rites and Brown finds that Faith is among the sinners. Following his experience, Brown returns to his home and becomes distrustful, desperate, and meditative. Hawthrone cuts himself off from his fellow man and condemns him to a life and death of gloom.

The plot in "The Birthmark" is slightly different from the plot in "Young Goodman Brown." It deals with a minor incident, the dream that Aylmer has about removing the birthmark, and the major incident, the actual removal of the birthmark. At the beginning of the story, Aylmer's wife, Georgiana, discovers her birthmark , a "mark of imperfection left by Nature," is objectionable to Aylmer. Then he has a dream about it. As Aylmer and Georgiana discuss the dream and the birthmark, they both become aware of the intensity of the effects of the repulsive handprint on her face. The dream sets the atmosphere for the plot to unfold upon the scene of Aylmer's laboratory. Will Aylmer be able to remove the stain? Hawthorne makes certain that the reader will wonder by having Georgiana ask Aylmer, "Can you remove this little, little mark, which I cover with the tips of two small fingers?" During this time, the reader becomes aware that Aylmer, at a time when he should be the happiest, cannot do anything but think about the disgusting birthmark. And, "although Aylmer's passion for his wife rivals his passion for science," he discovers that he must attempt to remove the mark. Georgiana agrees since she feels that it would be better to die than have her husband look upon her as an "object of horror and disgust." Forgetting his past failures, Aylmer performs the "cure" by giving Georgiana the medicine he prepares. Georgiana dies, but Aylmer claims success. This is a significant one in Aylmer's life, as his passion for perfection causes him to lose his happiness. Hawthorne does not, however, trace Aylmer's development beyond Georgiana's death except to say that he is "living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present."

The endings of both of Hawthorne's stories are ironically sad. Aylmer loses his wife and his chance for happiness. Brown loses his faith in God and in his family, and becomes a person of "existence" only.

The themes of "Young Goodman Brown" and "The Birthmark" are likewise similar. There are obvious moral implications in both stories. The theme of "Young Goodman Brown" is "In this world where there is good and evil, one should develop a realistic view of man, and must accept man's nature and power to good or to do evil." Simply put, we should have the values —the senses of good and bad, or desirable and undesirable—which prepare us to choose from the two possibilities.

The theme of "The Birthmark" is based on Aylmer's quest for perfection and his sin of pride. The theme of the story is that "one may set high goals in life, but the ultimate aim should be guided by a rational set of moral and ethical values, the principles of right and wrong in behavior." Aylmer could not accept the fact that to be human is to have imperfection, and that there are some things over which humans have no control. Both of Hawthorne's stories build toward the conclusion that, in several outstanding ways, they are more than a little alike. The conflicting emotions experienced by the protagonists lead us to think that they are "two of a kind."

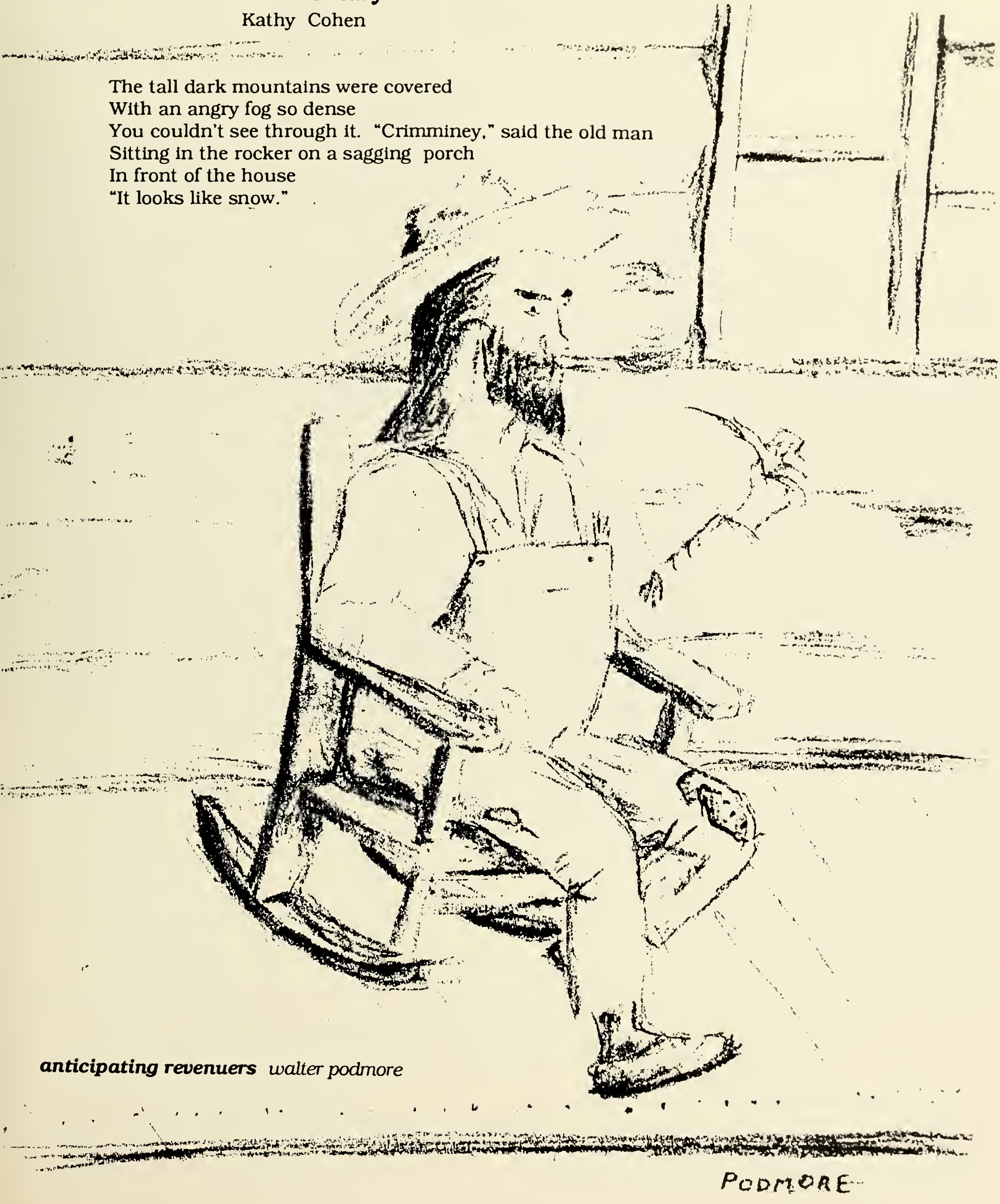


strangulation by beauty *chris robinson*

Commentary

Kathy Cohen

The tall dark mountains were covered
With an angry fog so dense
You couldn't see through it. "Crimminey," said the old man
Sitting in the rocker on a sagging porch
In front of the house
"It looks like snow."



anticipating revenuers *walter podmore*

Just Can't Win

William Hansford

While I growed up I was such a fuss
Everything I did made somebody cuss
Daddy told Mama, "Thangs'll be just fine
The boy only needs a little bit of time."
Time rode past like the train on its track
And Mama made Daddy take his words back
Trouble always found me--I just couldn't hide
I was always a pain in somebody's side
Then the war came along and I got hired
They said it was a job where I couldn't get fired
They sent me to a place where nobody'd give a damn
They sent me to hell . . . called Vietnam
I didn't take long 'fore I got settled in
And I got myself a brand new friend
It took twenty round mags fulla .223 balls
A coupla frag grenades and I'd kill Charlies all
Me and Sgt. Jerry we hit it off fine
And when we weren't killin' we were sippin' on wine
Charlie and his cousins, they comed one night
They thought they'd take us all without any fight.
Jerry didn't make it and I had to cry
I swore to God that Charlie's gonna die
So I volunteered for them recon patrols
And that's when it happened, so I jumped in a hole
The shootin was heavy so they left me there
But they'd be back I heard somebody swear
Let me take a long story and make it kinda short
They sent me back home with a medical report
They gave me some ribbons and some shiny little thang
But I'd rather have my legs if it's all just the same

Don't nobody cuss about me no more
But can somebody tell me what we did it all for?

Une Priere de Noel

Roger Smith

Une femme monte l'escalier du Basilique du Sacre-Coeur a Paris. Elle s'appelle Marie et elle est assez jeune, assez belle, mais elle n'est n'est pas bien habillee; en effet elle est en haillons. Le soleil vient de se coucher: c'est que Maire a attendu Il commence a neiger, et Marie commemce a trembler. Elle a froide, mais elle a peur aussi.

Enfin, elle arrive a la porte de l'eglise, mais elle n'entre pas. Les portes epaisses sont fermees contre le froid, mais Marie peut entendre dedans des voix douces, comme celles des anges. On dit une messe de la Veille de Noel.

Marie se met a genoux sur la marche, mais elle ne peut meme pas commencer un priere a cause de ses frissons. Il y a des larmes dans ses yeux. En descendent les joues, les larmes gelent sur le visage.

Marie est nee dans une tout petite salle ou habitait sa mere. Elle est morte il y a quatre ans, dans la meme chambre ou est nee Maire. Les derniers mots de sa mere sont toujourts avec Marie: "Ma fille, nous sommes toutes seules. Il n'y avait personne quand tu es nee, ici dans cette chambre, entre, ces draps. Et maintenant nous sommes encore seules." La mere de Marie travaillait le soir dans les rues de Montmarte. Elle ne savait pas le nom du pere de marie. Elle disait simplement que c'etait un cadeau de Dieu.

La musique dans l'eglise arrete tout a coup. Marie ouvre les yeux et elle regarde la porte craintivement. Elle recommence a frissoner. Elle se met debout et la porte de l'eglise ouvre. Un feluve de personnes sort. La plupart ne font pas attention a Marie, qui est dans l'ombre, derriere la porte. Elle attend jusqu'a ce que la derniere personne sort de l'eglise. C'est une femme, bien habille, avec son mari. Avec un frisson, final, Marie parte:

"Pardonez moi, madame."

"Quoi, qu'est-ce que vous voulez?" repond la dame, en regardent dans l'ombre d'ou est venue cette voix.

"Est-ce que je peux vous parler pendant deux ou trois minutes, s'il vous plait?"

"Mais pourquoi? Je n'ai rien a vous dire!"

"Oh, je vous implore, madame!"

"Qu'est-ce que c'est, Helene?" demande le mari qui avait deja descendu quelques marches de l'escalier.

"Il y a quelqu'un qui voudrait me parler."

A Christmas Prayer

A woman mounts the stairs that lead to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Paris. Her name is Marie, and she is young and pretty, but she is poorly dressed; in fact, she is in rags. The sun has just set: this is what Marie has waited for. It starts to snow, and Marie starts to tremble. She is cold and afraid.

Finally, she arrives at the door of the church, but she does not enter. The thick door is closed against the cold, but Marie can hear from within sweet voices, like those of angels. They are singing a mass for Christmas Eve.

Marie kneels on the steps, but she cannot even begin a prayer because of her shivering. There are tears in her eyes. As they slide down her cheeks, the tears freeze on her face.

Marie was born in a very small room where her mother lived. She died four years ago, in the same room where Marie was born. Her mother's last words still remain with Marie: "My daughter, we are all alone. There was no one here when you were born, here in this room, between these sheets. We have always been alone, and we are still alone." Marie's mother worked nights in the streets of Montmartre. She did not know the name of Marie's father. She said simply that her daughter was a gift from God.

The music in the church stops suddenly . . . Marie opens her eyes and stares anxiously at the door. She begins trembling again. She stands as the door of the church opens. A river of people emerges. Most of them do not see Marie, who stands in the darkness behind the door. She waits until the last person exits the church. It is a woman, very well dressed, who is with her husband. With a final shiver, Marie speaks:

"Excuse me, Madame."

"What! What do you want?" asks the woman, staring into the darkness where the voice came from.

"May I speak to you for a moment, if you please?"

"But why? I have nothing to say to you."

"Oh, I beg you, Madame!"

"What is it, Helene?' asks the woman's husband, who has already descended several steps.

"There's someone who wants to talk to me."

"I told you we shouldn't have come her tonight, among the vagabonds," says the man to his wife.

"But you know I like to come here for Christ-

Marie sort de l'ombre, et les deux peuvent pour la premiere fois les haillons de la pauvre.

"Je vous ai dit que nous n'aurieons pas du venir ici ce soir, parmi les clochards," dit le monsieur a sa femme.

"Mais c'etait ici au Sacre-Coeur ou'on a baptiste mon pere," repond la dame.

Marie continue, "Seulement deux minutes, madame, je vous implore! Quand j'avais six ans, ma mere m'a envoyee ici, au Sacre-Couer, avec une lettre, tres mal ecrite, j'en suis sure. Mais elle voulait que le cure me donne des instructions pour la premiere communion. Il m'a demande si'l'on m'avait baptiste. Je ne savais pas, et le cure m'a fait retourner chez moi. En verite, je n'etais pas baptisee, ni ma mere."

"Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez de moi?" demande la dame, qui ne comprende pas.

"Je veux que vous faissiez une priere pour moi. Vous etes bien chretienne, et moi, je ne peux pas entrer dans l'eglise a cause de mes origines et de mes vetements sales. Est-ce que vous pouvez rentrer dans l'eglise? Je ne veux pas mourir avant de l'avoir fait faire."

"Mais vous etes jeune et malgre la crasse, vous avez l'air d'entre en sante. Vous n'allez pas mourir!"

"Je vous implore, madame! Une priere courte! j'en ai besoin!"

"Non, je n'ai pas le temps. Pourquoi est-ce que vous m'avez choisie? Ma maison est loin d'ici et je dois marcher beaucoup pour arriver chez moi. Regardez-la, mon mari est deja au trottoir! Voici une piece de monnaie . . . je pense que ce c'est cinq francs . . . je ne peux pas la lire. En tout cas,vous pouvez acheter quelque chose dont vous avez besoin."

Et la femme s'en va. Il y a encore des larmes aux yeux de Marie. Elle tient la piece de monnaie dans le poing. Elle la regarde comme une relique sacree. La dame est chretienne, elle a ete baptisee, et aussi son pere, dans cette meme eglise, le Sacre-Couer, ou Marie ne peut pas entrer. Mais la dame etait dans l'eglise, et aussi son argent.

Marie tenait la piece quand elle a saute dans la Seine ou flottaient des morceaux de glace.

mas Eve. My father was baptized here at the Sacred Heart. Just be glad I didn't want to come to midnight mass," answers the woman.

"Yes, yes . . ." says the man.

Marie continues, "Only two minutes, Madame, I implore you! When I was six years old, my mother sent me here to the Sacred Heart, with a letter, very badly written, I am sure of it. She wanted that the cure give me instructions for the first Communion. He asked if I had been baptized. I didn't know, so he sent me home. In truth, I wasn't baptized, nor was my mother."

"But what do you want from me?" asks the woman, who does not understand.

"I want you to make a prayer for me. You are a good Christian, and me, I can't enter the church because of my background and my dirty clothes. Will you go back into the church and say a prayer? I don't want to die without having it done."

"But you are young and despite the dirt, you seem to be in good health. You're not going to die!"

"I beg you Madame! A short prayer! I need this!"

"No, I don't have the time. Why do you choose me? My house is far from here, and I have to walk a long way to get there. Look! My husband's already on the sidewalk! Here's a coin . . . I think it's five francs . . . I can't read it in the dark. At any rate, you take it and buy something that you need."

And the woman is gone. There are tears in Marie's eyes again. She holds the coin in her fist and looks at it as if it were a holy relic. The woman is a Christian, she was baptized, and her father ,too, in this same church, the Sacred Heart, where Marie cannot enter. But the woman was in church, and her money as well.

Marie clenches the coin as she drops into the Seine, where pieces of ice are floating.

Come and Go
Connie Flythe Burnsmier

When you come to me be silent
Utter not a sound.
Spoken words can be so violent

Come to me in the dark of night
Upon the walls no shadows cast.
Love in the dark fades with the light

When you leave me be ever swift
Waste not a single minute.
You'll leave not a single cleft

Leave me before the break of day
While the grass is wet with dew.
It doesn't matter now what you say

I never did belong to you.

Empty Mind
Ron Speir

I sit upon the hill,
Thinking quietly alone.
The cool breeze blows
Calmly, pulling on my hair;
My eyes open up,
As the world begins to spin . . .

My thoughts float round and round;
I recall images—people places things—
The ghosts in my mind
Snap thoughts down my spine:
Life to chase, Death to flee.

Bits of logic,
Fall in place,
My mind begins to click;
Shooting empty thoughts
Straight through my head.

The aberrations fade
Promptly, I try to stir,
Fighting Earth's gravity,
And I stand, all alone.

Sex Talk with Dr. Sue

Stanley Cross

. . . And the only way I can get it up (oops, can I say that on the air?).

• Well, you already have . . .

- Sorry. Well anyway, the only way I can get Aroused is if my wife dresses in camouflage underwear and holds a loaded pistol to my head.

• Well sir, I don't suppose that there is anything wrong with you. Many people need that rush, uh, that sense of mortal danger to add excitement to their humdrum lives.

- I can't tell you how relieved I am to hear you say that. I think many less open-minded people would think that I'm sort of, well, perverted.

• That's true, but I wonder if you don't think that it's sort of dangerous to use a loaded firearm?

- Well, we make sure to keep the safety on.

• I see. What does your wife think about this?

- My wife is such a kind, gentle, understanding person; but I think that she kind of enjoys the role of Dominatrix.

• Yes, but I do believe that it is very important to ask her how she feels about your, uh, special needs.

- You're right, Dr. Sue. I'll do that.

• Well that's good to hear.

- Thanks a lot.

• You're welcome. I'm Dr. Sue and this is *Sex Talk*. Hello, you're on the air, go ahead please.

- Hello?

• You're on the air go ahead...

- Hi, Dr. Sue, I've got a problem.

• How old are you?

- I'm fifteen years old.

• O.K. What can I help you with?

- Well I got this girl pregnant . . .

• Whoa, have you talked to your parents about this?

- Well my father left home recently. . .

• What about your mother?

- She's never really at home. She's very involved with her work, that's why my father left, I think. He felt unwanted, that's what he told me, anyway. He ran away with some girl.

• You never see her?

- Who?

• Your mother.

- Oh. Well, hardly ever. Sometimes at breakfast, but she works at night, so she's usually too tired to talk.

• Yes, but this is very important, don't you think?

- Yes, but she usually tells me that I'm old enough now to take care of myself.

• Yes, that's what I often tell my son. He's about your age. Isn't there anyone to talk to?

- Well, there's the maid, but she's always talking about her 13 children she's been raising since she was 16, and I figure that she has enough to worry about.

• I see. Well, listen son, I think you should make a special effort to tell your mother about this, don't you think so?

- Yes.

• Call her at work if you have to.

- O.K.

* I hope things work out for you.

- Thanks. Goodbye.

* It's so important to communicate with your youngsters, folks. I'm a single mother and I know that it can be tough... Well, it's time for a commercial break. This is Dr. Sue, and you're listening to *Sex Talk* . . .

# # #

% Hey Sue, pick up on line 3. I think that it's your son, he says it's important. Make it quick, you're on in 30 seconds.

* Hello Jimmy, make it quick, I'm on in 10 seconds . . .

divergence of the twain *ron speir*

A Modern Poet
Ron Speir

If my voice were strong,
Strong enough to call out
Across the buffer centuries,
To call out to the past,
Call out to those daft Romantics.

I see the Romantic scribes,
Putting pen to paper,
Scribbling aerial thoughts,
To call out to them:
Shelley, Keats, Byron, Wordsworth.

They wrote so boldly,
Wild thoughts transverse
Through the centuries,
Pens strike forceful blows,
Resounding through time.
The words move me so;
My heart swells inside,
As I listen to the wind,
They call to me:
But fertile time is lost
As I rush fervently—
To load wordprocessor.

Thoroughfare
Carol Ann Causey

Stabbing, jabbing, desecrating my Roget's thesaurus.
I synonymously massacre, kill, immolate my book.
Grasping, clasping, seizing my blade.
I slit, sever, rip its tedious pages.

Dying, expiring, perishing, crossing the River Styx.
I corrupt, defile, violate the immaculate.
Shamelessly, brazenly, wantonly, without disgrace,
Debauching, plundering, raping purity.

An urchin, a ragamuffin, a tatterdemalion
Pleading, begging, urging to be set free.
Struggling, laboring, writhing to be set free,
But denied, refused, negated . . . you'll pay.

Destruction, obliteration, eradication . . . my gang will get you.
Blood flows, trickles, circulates.
Disorder, confusion, imbroglio.
Terminus, Armageddon, The End.

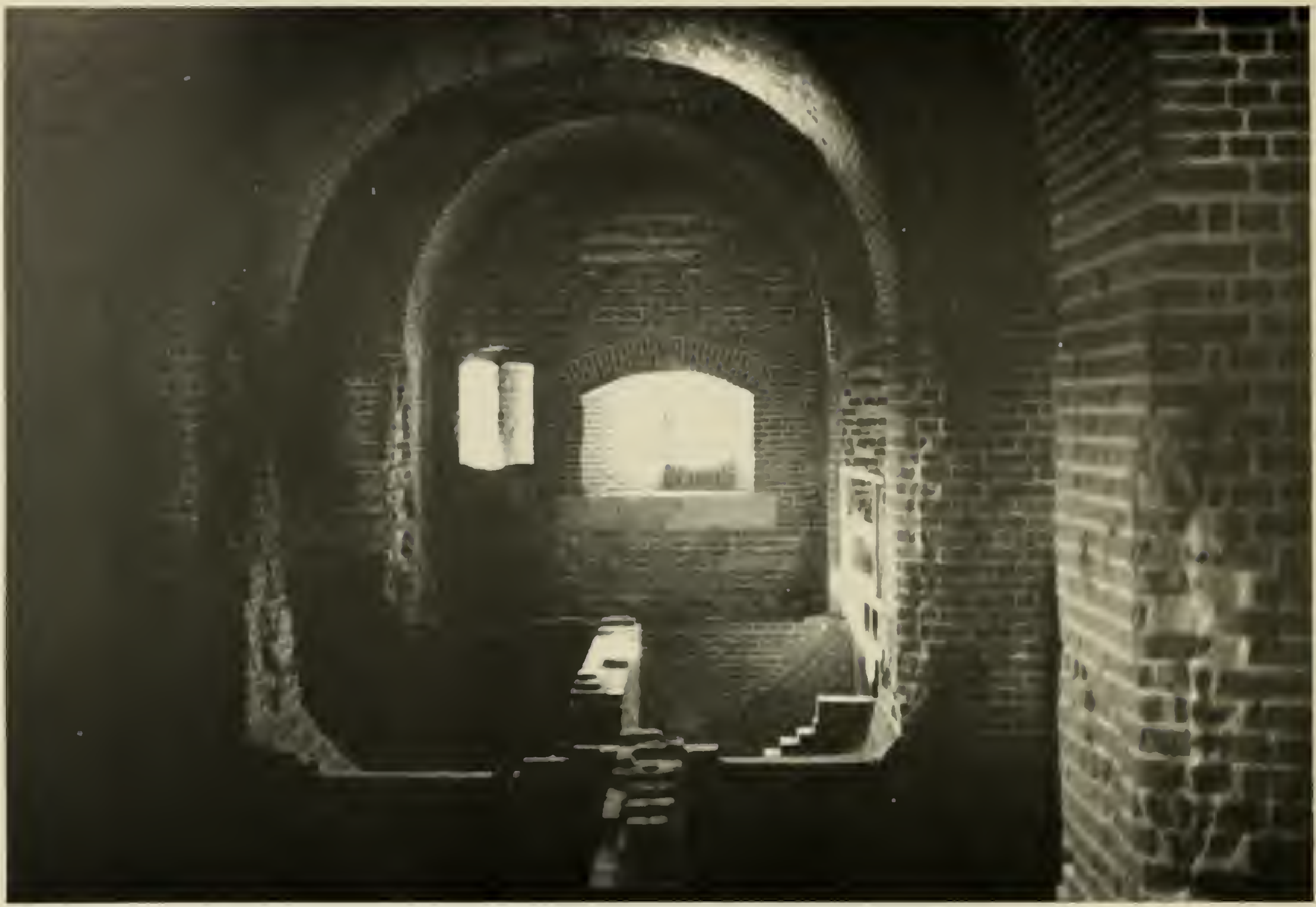
Damn thesaurus.

programming life (input,output);

sigmund hudson;

```
10    begin {main}
20        if sin( abe ) ( large then
30              call Him;
40        else
50              increment(time);
60              continue;
70              more;
80              test;
90        end if;
100       while (not end_of_line) do
110          read( cell_data);
120          mull;
130          moan;
140       end loop;
150       end all;
160   end {main}

execution completed, 10.3.87, 12.01, Reidsville,GA
```



passages *heather birkheimer*

Calliope 1990

Armstrong State College

Calliope 1990

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Youth & Childhood

Henrietta and Ducks -- D. Wade

“One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out to soon”

Frost, “Birches”

Silvereyes

Ashlee L. Waldron

I met a man with silver eyes
he gave me some laughter, told me some lies...
he took me to a world of kaleidoscope skies
as I drowned in the shimmering pools of his eyes.

Colors swirled and danced
before his glittering eyes.
I swam unfettered and free...
and rested on clouds softer than a baby's sigh.

Submerged in the molten mercury,
I languidly reached out with one hand
only to grasp the tail of another falsehood...
which brought me quick out of my kaleidoscope land.

As I surfaced through the quicksilver,
I stopped to gather the shards of my shattered heart...
I regretfully left that carefree, marvelous place
and pondered the mocking silver eyes that had torn my world apart.

Nature's Phoenix

Christopher A. McMichael

Whispered from the child's lips
Harken to the future's holding
When nature
Takes back the gifts it has given.
From the ashes of mankind the winged figure
Shall rise.
And in its eye shall gleam
The spark
of nature's beauty
To leap from the eye
And once again set ablaze
The earth.
Until the smokeless
Fires of nature
Burn
In fiery unspoilt splendor
Once again.

The Enchanted House in the Wood -- Rick Leech

Faith

B. Jackson

"Mary Jo, don't let me hear you say that word again. "Belly" is such a disgustin' word, it's your stomach and I'm gonna fix you some supper as soon as I get you to the house. We just need to pick up y'all some clothes for church. I declare, I don't know what y'all's momma would do without us. What with y'all's daddy gone off to that place and left her all by herself in her condition. Earl, help me find these girls' shoes, that is if they got any fit to wear to church. Lord-a-mercy what these children done gone through."

That's Aunt Wanda Mae, always yakkin'. All I said was my belly's grumblin'. I didn't mean to make her mad. She scares me when she starts carryin' on like this and her keepin' us. I just wish Momma and Daddy would come home and she would go away and leave us alone. My Momma and Daddy's better'n her, not always fussin' over this and that like a crazy chicken. So we got to go to her house. Why can't we just stay home by ourselves? There's plenty of us to take care of things. Annie and me will have to sleep in that stupid back bedroom. Looks like it's 'bout to fall off the house. And those bunk beds, stacked right by the windder. I know there's a panther in those woods. One time I was sleep'n' there and he come right up to the windder and looked at me with his yeller eyes. I was too scared to move. Just squeezed my eyes shut and prayed to God to make him go away. When I opened my eyes he was gone. Thank you God.

Bubba's the lucky one. He likes it out here. He gets to go huntin' in the woods with Earl Jr. while we're stuck here with you-know-who. She's bossin' Annie around tellin' her to hurry up and set that table. It's done got dark outside and my stomach is still grumblin'. I won't ever say that other word again. I don't wantt to be disgustin'. I try hard to be good and don't get in nobody's way. Momma always feeds us early and when it gets dark we've done had a bath.

Supper's finally ready and we all pile around the table starving. She makes us wait while she says the blessin', "Dear Lord in heaven, make us humbly and truly grateful for all your blessins...Lord watch over these little children, they need your help." I know she's a good woman cause Momma said so, if she just didn't make such a fuss.

She's got two kids herself, one good and one bad. The good one is Wanda Kay, she plays the piano and sings for us. The bad one is the boy, Earl Jr. One time we was all spendin' the night there, even Momma, and he got in the bed with me and asked me what was in my panties. That boy ain't stupid, why'd he wanta ask me that? I just jumped outta that bed and run to find my momma. She was watching tv and she put her arm around me and gave me a squeeze, didn't even say "What you doin' up?" I didn't ever tell nobody about Earl Jr. except I told my sisters to stay away from him and that's what I do too. I sure hope we ain't here long.

This room is cold but at least that panther didn't come back last night or nothin' else. We're gettin' ready to go to school. She comes in and says we got a baby brother. It's great because we don't have to go to school, but another brother? Ain't two enough? What's even better is Momma can come home now and we can too. Thank you God.

Now if Daddy could just come home. He's been gone so long, I don't know how long just a long, long time. We all miss him so bad. On Sundays we all sit at the table and everybody writes him a letter. It makes us cry we want him home so bad. Momma tells us he loves us very much and that's why he's gone so he can be a better daddy and not get drunk when he gets home. We keep askin' when he'll get well and come home but Momma don't know when. She just says he'll be back when he's well and we'll all be happy. I sure do love my daddy.

Daddy sent me a red billfoll with real leather. He sewed it with white laces. I didn't know my daddy could do that. I like it a lot and I take it with me every time Momma sends me to the store. Mostly we don't go to the store. We go 'cross the sidewalk and borrow toliet paper, then down the sidewalk and borrow soap. When Momma gets some money she goes to the grocery store ; then we give back what we borrowed.

Finally Daddy's home but things ain't like they're supposed to be. I thought when Daddy come home that we'd be just like everybody else and go shoppin' in town for things but there still ain't no money. That's how I know about Santa Claus.

Momma says that Santa Claus might not come to our house and I can't understand. Why not? Don't he love us? We all been real good. Next day or two I hear her talkin' about some church ladies are gonna give us some stuff so Santa Claus will come. Now I know there ain't no real Santa Claus. It's church ladies.

Them church ladies brought a red wagon for everybody and a clown for Susie. Bubba got a football and a sweater but I don't think the church ladies brought them 'cause they're new and everything else ain't. I don't know where Bubba's stuff came from. The best thing them church ladies brought was on the wagon. They filled that thing to the brim with books. I like books. I want that clown but Momma says it's Suzie's. It don't have her name on it. But the books make me forget about everything else. They have pictures in every one. There's about a hundred of them and they look just like each other 'cept they got different ABCs on their backs. Them church ladies musta brought some food too 'cause we're eatin' turkey and dressin' and cranberry sauce. I don't think I ever ate cranberry sauce before or I would've of remembered how bad it tastes. Before we can eat Momma says the blessin' and she thanks God for bringin' our daddy home and for givin' us a baby brother and she thanks God for the things we got for Christmas. Listenin' to her, I know we've got a lot of good things and I'm so glad I want to cry.❑

Casualty

Christopher A. McMichael

The morning
clear and warm.
Spring,
Renewal.
My father's father and I
made our way
through the newness
to the lakeside,
Cane poles,
Homemade lures.
We found our spot,
shady and deep,
and cast our bait.
Long hours we sat and conversed
on matters and ways of life.

Limp lines.
Still water.
As we made ready to leave,
baskets empty and lines untested,
my line snapped suddenly taut.
A brief struggle later my prize was before me.
Twisted.
Deformed.
Like some stone gargoyle
plucked from a Medieval church.
I cast my eyes to my father's father.
"Son," he said, "That is just an innocent
casualty of the war
between nature
and its children."

Christmas Tree

Ron Speir, Jr.

The star-lights sparkle
Against the green sky,
And the ceramic mouse hides
In the Sky Blue stocking...

The Wisemen walk across the limbs,
As the Santa waves
From underneath the tree —
Among the bright packages.

The Candy Cane is displayed
With its attached note:
“Thank You!”
A small token.

The child-made cross,
Held together with yarn,
The store-bought angels
All hang proudly.

The sacks of potpourri
Mask the smell
Of the Ceramic and glass
Prancing reindeer.

All the while...
The Velvet Angel sings,
Quietly reminding all
Of the importance.

A Christmas Gift

Ron Speir, Jr.

The dollar was clutched tightly in the little boy's trembling hand. He managed to get the heavy glass door open and slip inside the Wal-mart.

The greeting lady smiled at the bright young face. "Why good morning, young man," she greeted him. The boy just smiled proudly, "mornin'."

He stopped in the middle of the main aisle trying to remember which way the perfume counter was. By force of habit he proceeded by the toy section. Without any conscious command, he walked right up to the G.I. Joe action figures, and within seconds he had weeded out all the old figures, concentrating his attention on the new ones. He remembered them from the cartoon.

Then his attention broke away to the reason he came to the store. Adjusting his bearings, he scooted off to the perfume counter.

He always liked the perfume section. Mostly because the rectangular glass cases formed a fort-of-sorts to his eyes. One day, while a saleslady left on an errand, he snuck behind the counter. When the saleslady returned, he was caught fending off an enemy attack from the Chanel No. 5 side. He would have won, too, but she refused to let him fire one more shot from her staple gun.

His head just could peer over the top of the counter. The saleslady, a different one from the fort adventure, didn't see the little face searching through the odd shaped bottles with multi-colored waters inside. He looked over each bottle with the same careful eye that had examined the new G.I. Joe.

He rubbed the dollar deep in his palm. No one could see the dollar even if they knew he had it. The little hand had wrinkled the dollar up into a little ball that could be hidden within his tiny palm with the same effectiveness as a magician performing a sleight of hand. His mother had given him the dollar just that morning as his allowance for the week, and usually after a couple of weeks he had enough for another G.I. Joe.

But this dollar was special. He had planned all week to put it to a good use — buying his mom her Christmas present. He had never gotten her a present before. His Dad had always winked at him as he handed his mom a present for him. She had liked the perfume so much last year that he figured she would need some more, especially after he used half of it a couple of months ago when playing like he was a scientist. He had mixed up various colored "chemicals" into a mason jar when his mother walked in and yelled. A new bottle of perfume was required to even things, although he had already been punished with a sharp spanking.

He spied the same type bottle that he had "given" her last year. The lady still hadn't noticed him looking at her over the counter. She looked a little bit like his Aunt Annie, *but she was even bigger than Aunt Annie* — much to his amazement. *She just could walk between the counters without touching both sides. And her reddish hair was even all curled up like Aunt Annie's.*

" 'scuse me lady," he announced his presence. "I need to get some perfume for my Mom."

"Oh, my how thoughtful of you," she replied with a flash of her yellow teeth. "Which kind were you looking to get her?"

"That one right here," he pointed out the yellow-colored perfume in the small round bottle.

"What a perfect choice," she said with amusement. "I couldn't have recommended a better one myself."

As she reached into the glass counter, his grip on the dollar began to loosen. And as she put a brand new, unopened box of the perfume down on the counter, he carefully placed the dollar across from it and smoothed it out.

Her eyes glanced at the mutilated bill. A laugh slipped from her mouth. The boy smiled at the recently acquired dollar .

"I hope you got a few more of them son."

"Ain't it enough?"

"Maybe for a spoonful of this perfume, but the bottle itself probably costs more than a dollar," she responded.

He glanced down at his sneakers, nearly black from playing in the ditch beside his house. "Exactly how many more dollars do I need? I get a dollar a week, so I'll get a few more 'for Christmas. That's what this is — a Christmas present for my mom"

"I'm sorry son, but it'll be June or so before you'll be able to get your mom her present."

His stomach turned at this news, and an "Oh" slipped out of his lips. "You got anything I could get for her?" he asked with a shaking voice.

"Not for no dollar. Why don't you get your dad to come help you get a present."

He didn't look up. His hand took the dollar back into its palm, and he slowly walked back down the aisle. He passed back by the toy section without looking at the G.I. Joes. He continued past the greeting lady who stopped him and made him go around through the registers to the exit.

The dollar was once again tightly pressed within his palm.

* * *

Christmas morning came quickly.

His dad reached under the tree, and with a wink handed his mom a small box, wrapped in a bright red paper. She read the card and smiled at her son. Carefully, she pried the paper away to reveal a box. From the box she pulled out a round bottle of yellow perfume. She smiled, remembering how he had used up half the old bottle.

She gave him a big hug and kissed him. "Thank you, this is exactly what I needed."

The boy's stomach turned. His mother handed him a gift that he opened even slower than she had opened the perfume.

He pulled out a G.I. Joe that he already had...❑

Selfmate

Christy Cadle

Walk with you?
I will
If you'll slow down.
We'll walk on the beach
And gather shells
From its shore.

Slow down.
Your legs are too long,
I can't keep up.
I'll just wait.

Sing with you?
I will.
I'll sing the harmony.
We'll sing songs from the soul
And cry and smile
On every note.

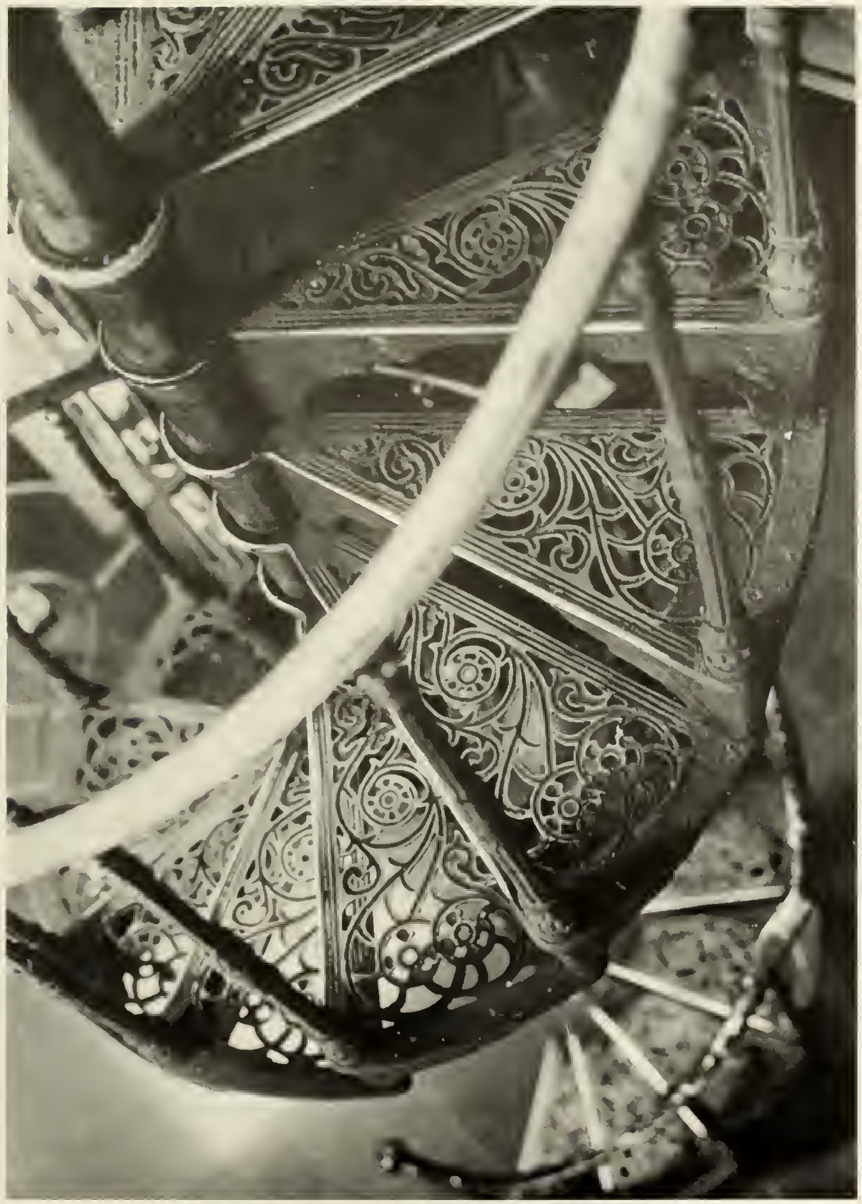
Please wait.
I'll learn the songs.
Your voice is too strong.
I guess I'll just listen.

Dance with you?
I will,
If you'll teach me.
We'll step together
Hand in hand
And move gracefully.

Please wait.
I'm not graceful.
You move too fast.
Maybe I'll just watch.

Stop the music!
I'll waltz alone
To the rhythm of my mind.

Adolescence



Untitled -- K. Roswall

"Ahead the long rails were glinting in the moonlight, stretching far away, away to somewhere, somewhere where he could be a man..."

Wright, "The Man Who Was Also a Man"

Kasey's Light

Christy Cadle

"I hate you!"

Then I heard Kasey's short, angry footsteps and the slamming door. It's funny that even though we've grown up we still fight like we did as kids, cussing and screaming, until one of us leaves. I always thought that we would grow up to be best friends. But I guess we're just too different.

I wasn't that upset. I knew this fight would end like all the others. No apologies. No compromises. We would just quit speaking to each other for a few days. Eventually we would both pretend that nothing ever happened. I was still angry, though, because she had the last word, as usual. I suppose that since I'm the oldest I should try to make peace and press out the wrinkles so we can be friends. But I can't. She never understands a word I say. It's like this game called "gossip" that we used to play when we were little. A bunch of kids would sit in a circle. Then one person would whisper a phrase or sentence to another person, and it would be repeated around the circle, person to person. The last person would say whatever it was out loud, and it would be funny because it was never what was originally said. That's how I feel with Kasey. Talking to her is like talking through a group of people who get the words and meanings mixed up.

I guess we get along okay. Most sisters I know can't stand each other. Sometimes, we actually get along really well. But most of the time we are like roommates who got stuck together and are forced to put up with each other. I've always wanted more. Sometimes, rarely, everything seems to be alright and we are really great together. It's the times that make me love her so much, when we get along, that make me so frustrated with our usual acquaintance-like relationship. If I could just get used to it being one way or the other, I'd be okay. But as soon as I get used to her moody, erratic behavior, she'll do something really nice, like make my favorite dessert or give me a special gift, just because she feels like it. That really throws me off. But that's just how she is.

If you met her, though, you'd love her. After you got to know her. She acts real tough at first, but she's really sensitive. Too sensitive, to tell the truth. She's independent, outgoing, and friendly. She can make friends with anyone. She's not like me at all. She actually used to tell people that I was adopted. I guess some people even believed it. We don't look alike. And we sure don't act alike. Anyway, she has a lot of friends, a lot more than I do. So if she's so likeable and friendly, why do we fight so much?

My parents always said we don't get along because Kasey resents me. She feels like she had to grow up in my shadow, like everything she did was overshadowed by something I did. Conversation, good grades, good jobs, some things just came easier for me than for her. And my parents felt so sorry for her that they spoiled her; I've always resented that.

We have always fought a lot. Kasey had an inherent gift for bringing out the best, and the worst, in people. She knows exactly what to do and say to turn me into an ugly, rampaging goblin that delights in mental torture. I don't know; I think sometimes it is much easier to be mean to someone than it is to be kind and understanding.

I guess I've always felt like she feels sorry for herself too much. I can't stand that. Mostly because she doesn't have a reason to. There are lots of good things about Kasey too. Maybe they are harder to see because she's so short tempered and moody. She always reminds me of light. Candlelight. Because it's not a really bright light, but it's always there. The wind blows and the light flickers, then grows strong again. She's not so bright that she stands out; she just glows a little.

I hear the door open again and look up. Kasey walks in with her auburn head held high, to signal me that her return doesn't mean I've won. I never meant to make her angry in the first place. I just wanted to be there for her, give her a little sisterly advice. She didn't want it. Kasey thinks advice means I'm telling her she is doing something wrong. Maybe I am. But I'm only trying to help.

I can hear her slamming things around in the kitchen and I pretend not to watch. I'm not mad anymore, but I can tell Kasey is. She always takes things harder than I do so she'll probably be upset for a while. I don't say anything, because it's obvious that she won't listen, especially when she's this upset. So I just watch. She looks different when she's mad. Her complexion is blotched and red, almost like she has broken out in a rash. And even though she is really petite, she seems to get a lot bigger when angry or upset.

Things are quiet in the kitchen again. Maybe she's cooled off. I doubt it. She starts walking toward me, stomping actually, and I look away. Here we go again. She stops in front of me so I have to look up and she's holding this big plate piled with chocolate chip cookies. My favorite. Then, in her meanest, most hurt voice, she says that she made them for me this morning. No reason. She just did it. It works. I feel incredibly guilty. All I can manage is a weak, "Thank you."

She walks back into the kitchen and starts cleaning up, which is unusual, because she is really a slob. Anyway, the fight is over. I start watching her again and can't help thinking what a shame it is that we resent each other so much sometimes that it causes this wall between us. I guess in a way it's funny. She doesn't know that my resentment of her grows out of jealousy, the same reason she resents me. I guess Kasey doesn't know that it doesn't take brilliant sunlight to dispel shadows. Candles do it too. Maybe someday, when we grow up some more, I'll tell her. Maybe then we'll be friends. ❑

Untitled

Adrian

I don't know what to make
of your sometime glad to see you mood,
of your bouncy carefree style,
of the many things that you do.
I don't know why I think of you
with such fond affection,
or why I want to make love to you
with abandonment and perfection.
I only know that I think of you
whenever you are not around
and sometimes feel afraid to think
I might lose what I've just found.
It's really very hard for me
to tell you exactly how I feel,
except that it's different, new, and real.
And sometimes when I think of you
it's for 20 years or more.
Its then that I miss you
most of all.
I know the first time I saw you
I looked straight into your eyes
and I wanted you forever.

Glances

Adrian

I see he now and then, here and there.
We always smile but never speak.
I often wonder if conversation
is not within our reach.

I don't want to take the chance
to talk and break the spell,
because when our eyes meet
We see it all too well.

Lifetimes in a glance.

Carpe Momentum
or To You From Me

D. R. Newman

I don't know who you are.
Do you?
Wish I did--
Dear or not.

I don't know where you are,
But then
I never did,
Near or far.

Nothing changes.   Seconds drag.

You can't know who I am.
Can I?
Wish you could—
Fear and all.

You can't know why I am,
But then
You never could.
Live to die.

Everything changes. Years fly.
We won't know who we are.
Will we?
Wish we would—
Bad or good.

We won't know when we are,
But then
We never try.
Time after time.

Some things change. Now is here.

Boater
Adrian

I bounced upon the water
in cramped style,
side by side with disease.

I paid in gold for quarter
this place defiled
among the seas.

I cannot stand or linger
lie down, walk or whimper.
I can only hope for deliverance
from those who do not know me.

I can only hope to live
beyond my boarded seat on the seas.

The sun that dries my life's force,
The night that chills my soul.
The salt that cracks my face,
my tribute to the old.

It is a new place I dream of,
foreign thoughts that I scheme of,
and liberties unknown.

Please don't fear my sufferance,
I am of the boat people.
I will be free.

Untitled -- Dot Wade

Behavioral Psychology

BJ English

Tired;
too tired
even to dream.
Sometimes I wonder
Why am I
the way I am.
I live a fairly normal life
surrounded by
my dreams,
and now they
want to take
the dreams away.
. . .so I can
be like all
the rest
and live
life like
a man.
I am not
a man!
I am a girl.
And I will not
Give up my dreams.
so sue me. . . . . .

Change the Race

Christy Cadle

It's the age of crack,
burning flags, and marches
Abortion: the Vietnam of
the 80's
And children without homes--
Bearing children.

He thinks it's funny
And walks about singing
"Gonna start a revolution..."
And dreading AIDS.

King calls him "the walking man"
Parents call him Death
Kids say he's a friendly lad
More fun than all the rest.

Churches pray for the children
Moms cry as they sing
Society progresses
Won't stop for anything.

The family struggles to
Hold On
But individuality and independence
Work to break the grasp.

Everyone is running
The kids are running faster
Somebody better trip them
They're heading for disaster.

Or least change the race.

The Inescapable Condition

Mike Pahno

The soft gray moss littering the cemetery grounds crunched under my feet as I futilely tried silencing my approach to the gathering of people around the casket. The service had already begun, and I was late, though I must admit that my tardiness was intentional. I did not want to face the ever so harsh reality that one is forced to view at such times: the cold realization that no one escapes death. Looking at the dull, silver casket which encased my friend--my very young friend-intensified this feeling and made me realize how foolishly unrealistic people can be; we seem to live in a false world of immortality in which death is an experience reserved for others. At least that is how I lived. Feeling uncomfortable having my mind inundated with such thoughts, I looked at the sky in hopes of finding some sign of life, perhaps a bright sun ray or a chirping bird.

Instead, my gaze was met by a pale gray sky which seemed to stretch into infinity as though deliberately blocking any rays of warmth the sun might be trying to push through . The day was made for a funeral, I thought, while tugging my overcoat close to my body protecting it from the biting chill of the freezing wind which suddenly arose; it howled between the aged oak trees ripping moss and twigs from the gnarled branches and sending them hurtling through the air to be dodged by the crowd. As people stirred, regaining their composer, I took more notice of them.

Like the sky above, they seemed lifeless and almost frozen in time. Some looked as though they could actually smell the pungent odor of death hanging over the cemetery; others held visages of stoic impartiality. However, we all were alike in one way--everyone wore the same empty, soulless, black clothes: shapeless black dresses covered by black raincoats, veils covering faces, or, perhaps , a mournful gray suit. The donning and divesting of these clothes seemed to be a ritual in itself. Putting on the macabre apparel quenched the life force in a sea of black; where on returning home, the clothes were cast off and one re-entered the world of the living.

The priest's chanting tore me away from the relative safety of my thoughts and brought my full attention to the ceremony at hand. In severe contrast to everyone else, the priest was garbed in vestments of the purest white; he clearly understood the rebirth in death. Even his sharp tenor voice pierced the thick atmosphere of gloom and seemed to mock death. His chanting was momentarily interrupted by a soft scraping sound.

Distracted by the sound, I looked in the direction of the noise and saw the casket being lowered into the concrete vault. My gaze dropped from the vault into the black pit which waited to receive the cell my friend was imprisoned in. For an instant, the hole seemed to grow larger as if it wanted to engulf everyone in sight to gratify an insatiable hunger. I stepped back involuntarily. Before the lid could be placed on the vault, the priest scooped up a handful of grayish-black dirt and threw it on the coffin. The service was over, and I was glad.

Upon returning home, my mind could not stop filling itself with images of death and how it extinguishes life so indiscriminately. Rich, poor, young, old, black or white, it does not matter; we all end up the same way. I was tired of death and wearied from the day's events, so I took off my soulless black suit and started living again--but only for today. Tomorrow may never come. ❑

Entangled -- Ron Speir, Jr.

Viewing The Urn

Ron Speir, Jr.

There it sits, the urn:
Shapely, cold, and dull,
Basking in an eternal vision
Never to be ended.

Eons ago, a hand works
Shaping the urn with care;
Eons ago, a brush moves slowly,
Inscribing a poem with grace.

Many eyes have read it;
Either the colored figures
Or the black and white rendition
From the hand of another artist.

I read the colors of the urn,
Feeling the smooth creation;
Carefully, I raise it higher
For a glorious display.

The story remains frozen:
The youth still before the kiss,
The coquette ever running,
The heifer never sacrificed.

The stasis of eternity
Cradled in my hands.
All the suspended years,
Slip slowly away from me:
As the urn shatters —

Cracked Up

D. R. Newman

Deep dark secrets, tales untold--
Haunting everyday, unfold--
Little by little, causing more
Confusion. Evermore.

Eternal nights existing amidst nothing.
While anxiety eats away all sanity.

Will it ever change? It seems not.
Can life be reclaimed? Perhaps, but
Likely will remain a voidal vortex
Until dustbound.

When that dusky day arrives--grieve not!
Anyone who might. Rejoice, however,
For my spirit shall be free
Of all this misery--
My person prison, my mind, my life.

Ruined by the pleasures I sought to release me
But which only bound me tighter,
And threw me down the dark chasm of madness.

Untitled -- Edward Jenkins

The Castle Walpole Built

A Critical Essay by
Lisa Catron

In 1764 Horace Walpole launched a new genre into the public arena which would forever change the shape of literature. His romance *The Castle of Otranto* propelled the Gothic novel into the forefront of late eighteenth century British literature, and this new genre, with Walpole's work as the cornerstone, would later influence literature to the present day. Although the work is not spectacular in its words, plot or characters, *The Castle of Otranto* and its creator stand as the watershed between eighteenth century literature and nineteenth and twentieth century literature. In his introduction to his edition of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto and the Mysterious Mother*, Montague Summers, the foremost scholar on the Gothic, states, "*The Castle of Otranto* is, in fine, a notable landmark in the history of English taste and English literature" (1vii). *The Castle of Otranto* is such a landmark because of its break with the fashionable novel, its tone and its redemption of the Gothic tradition.

Until Walpole's *Castle* came about, the Gothic was shrouded in baseness. In the

Spectator number 62 written in 1711, Addison writes:

> I look upon these Writers as Goths in Poetry, who like those in Architecture, not being able to come up to the beautiful Simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans, have endeavored to supply its Place with all the Extravagances of an irregular Fancy. (192)

For Addison, "Gothic" was wild and unrealistic and possessed no use in the day of didactic and moral writings. In 1749 a most notable novelist made his opinion of Gothic known in his novel *Tom Jones* . In this novel Fielding has Mrs. Western rebuke her brother with, "O more than Gothic ignorance" (308). In the eighteenth century the word "Gothic" carried with it a very definite and particular meaning which "conveyed the idea of barbarous, tramontane, and antique" (Summers 37). The derogatory connotations surrounding "Gothic" would continue to swirl about unrefuted until 1756.

With the publication of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* in 1756, a psychological study of eighteenth century mentality was attempted and the first step to redeeming the Gothic had begun. In his work Burke deals with the idea of Terror and the effects it can produce in a reader or a viewer. Burke saw both Gothic and Terror filling up a person so one could not entertain any other object or idea. Burke was followed in 1762 by Bishop Richard Hurd with his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*. In his twelve letters Hurd deals with the Gothic as being superior over classical art because the Gothic could produce the sublime. With these two studies behind him, Walpole steped forth in 1764 to create a new form of literature which would dispel the myth surrounding the eighteenth century notion of Gothic and endow it with a new definition.

The first edition of *The Castle of Otranto* appeared on Christmas Eve of 1764, just two years after Hurd's defense of the Gothic. In this edition Walpole states that the story is a translation taken from an ancient manuscript written in Naples during 1529 and he, Walpole, is merely the translator. He "guesses" the author's motives in writing the tale and sees Terror, which never allows the story to languish, as the principle engine of the work. Walpole makes a pointed jab at the novelists of his time by stating, "there is no bombast, no similes, flowers or digressions, or uunnecessary description" (16). The work holds no interruptions by the author on such ideas of love or prudence like Fielding or other eighteenth century novelists. For Walpole, "everything tends directly to the catastrophe" and "the reader's attention is never relaxed" (17). He concludes the Preface by stating:

> Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe, that the ground work of the story is founded on truth. (17)

Walpole bases his assumption on the careful descriptions given of the castle like "the chamber on the right hand"; thus, he feels the author has some real castle in mind.

When the first edition sold all five hundred copies, a second edition came out in in April of 1765 with a new preface. In the second Preface Walpole admits to writing this fantastic tale. Walpole steps out from behind the behind the "translator's" veil because of "the favorable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public" (19). In the first edition Walpole had no idea of the reception *The Castle* would receive, and, to save face, did not own up to the writing of the tale. Upon being received quite well by the public, Walpole admitted to the authorship and, in the second Preface, explained why he wrote the work. Walpole states that *The Castle of Otranto* was:

> ...an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the later, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. (19)

The Castle of Otranto was Walpole's way of rebelling against the popular novel. The commonplace, current events, and the moralistic overtones, which authors such as Richardson, Fielding and Smollett used, were the dams that stopped up fancy and imagination. By relating his tale in novel form, Walpole would create a hybrid where action was continuous and the marvelous would reign. Robert Kiely states in his *The Romantic Novel in England* that

> ...he [Walpole] obviously had it particularly in mind to correct an imbalance by letting fanciful and mysterious deeds flow abundantly over the familiar ground cultivated by novelists of "common life." (5)

For Mudrick the work seems "to have been written not by a person but a schizoid Time-Spirit" (10).

This schizoid Time-Spirit known as Horace Walpole, son of the great politician Robert Walpole, was a man who felt and lived in the past. In a letter to his friend George Montagu, Walpole writes:

> Visions, you know, have always been my pasture; and so far from growing old enough to quarrel with their emptiness, I almost think there is no wisdom comparable to that of exchanging what is called realities of life for dreams. Old castles, old pictures, and the babble of old people, make one live back into centuries, that cannot disappoint one. One holds fast and surely to what is past. The dead have exhausted their power of deceiving—one can trust Catherine of Medicis now. (Summers 153)

Holed up in his "castle" Strawberry Hill, Walpole surrounded himself with objects from the dark ages and drew from these the details of his tale. Turning back to the middle-ages, the amateur antiquarian turned around the conventions of the novelists and set about writing his tale.

The characters of the tale are not outstanding in any way. They are stock characters drawn from old fables and myths. The two main characters are Alfonso the Good, who is dead, and Manfred, the man who usurped Alfonso's castle and title. Alfonso may be dead, but he is far from gone. The figure of Alfonso is the main engine behind the tale. *The Castle of Otranto* begins with Alfonso's helmet, from his statue in front of the St. Nicholas' Church, falling from the sky upon Conrad, Manfred's son, just minutes before he is to be married to the fair Lady Isabella. In chapter two, Alfonso's giant foot and leg appear in the courtyard. Later, his giant sword appears. Alfonso has come back to avenge Manfred's usurpation of his title and lands from the legitimate heir. The legitimate heir is none other than Theodore the peasant, who really isn't a peasant. The reader is given clues to Theodore's real identity with passages such as "a young hero resembling the picture of the good Alfonso in the gallery" (47). Theodore falls in love with Matilda, Manfred's daughter. Matilda is only second to Hippolita, Manfred's wife, in her long suffering at the hands of Manfred. Hippolita is past her child bearing years and Manfred needs an heir. He turns to Isabella. Manfred designs to divorce his wife and marry Isabella, who runs away to seek sanctuary in the church.

The characters are passive and only act when Fate, in the figure of Alfonso, takes a hand. The confusion which the plot, characters and action produce is apt. As Kiely writes, "Gothic fiction was not only about confusion, it was written from confusion (36). Unlike the novel, *The Castle of Otranto* possesses nothing which is normal, for in the tale the abnormal rules. The reader finds no touchstone in any of the characters to measure the actions of the other characters. While the plot tends to be confusing, only one thing holds it together—the Castle.

The castle serves as the glue to hold the tale together. In creating his castle, Walpole built the classic Gothic castle found in literature. The chase after Isabella leads down into the cloisters with secret passages and tunnels (37). The chambers of the castle are lavish, but an air of gloom pervades all. Although the castle is not described in length, snatches of description permeate the tale to keep it cohesive.

As confusing as the tale sounds, it does not differ from novels such as *Tom Jones* in the area of hidden identities. With mistaken identities aside, Walpole cuts all ties with popular novels. Ghost run rampant in the tale, unlike *Tom Jones* where they were mocked. The ancestral ghost which walks from the painting and beckons Manfred to follow is a new convention in literature, but is still used today (35). The pieces of Alfonso's armor falling out of the sky seem absurd to twentieth century readers, but they were new in the eighteenth century. The figure which confronts Frederic, father of Isabella, is a skeleton with "fleshless jaws and empty sockets" wrapped in a hermit's cowl (104). These visions of the fantastic and marvelous are found only in Walpole's tale and absent in the novel.

In the popular novels of the eighteenth century, dialogue or letters allowed the author to convey the actions and feelings of his characters. Walpole's work, in contrast, stresses not the words of the characters, but rather the lack of words. For Walpole words are all too frequently unable to convey what a character is feeling. When Conrad is discovered crushed by Alfonso's helmet, the servant is described as:

> ...running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court. (27)

As Isabella runs through the "intricate cloisters," her lamp is extinguished by a sudden gust of wind which leaves her in the dark. Walpole writes that "words cannot paint the horror of the princess's situation" (37). While words were the cornerstone of the novelist's trade, Walpole shows that words cannot always describe feelings.

The feelings of Theodore to Matilda are those of love, but a love which can never be. Unlike the novel, the two lovers are not united at the end. Walpole's tale allows no reward for chastity or innocence. Matilda is presented as the dutiful daughter, pure and innocent, but to no avail. When Theodore questions the friar, "Can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modesty [Matilda]", the friar replies:

> It is sinful to cherish those whom heaven has doomed to destruction. A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation. (94)

Manfred's race is doomed. Walpole turns to the idea of the sins of the fathers being revisited on their children. Manfred ends up killing his own daughter. Theodore, now the Prince of Otranto, mourns his loss and marries Isabella. Their marriage is one of convenience, for:

> Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent discourse with Isabella of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one, with whom he could for ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul. (111&112)

On this note, the novel ends. For Walpole with his vision, there is no happy ending, only one of the continuance of life despite upsets. This schizoid Time-Spirit bridges the space between ancient and current time. Although the characters are two-dimensional, the plot keeps the reader swept up in the action and brings to life the marvelous.

Walpole's ability to bridge the gap between the occult, the fanciful and the marvelous to create an entertaining tale is his greatest achievement. The eighteenth century was ready for such a bridge and eagerly crossed over it looking for new bridges to the world of imagination. The tale was translated into French in 1767, Dutch in 1777 and Italian in 1791. The tale hit the stage under the name of *The Count of Narbonne* on November 17, 1780, and was a smash (*The Castle of Otranto and the Mysterious Mother* xxxvi). Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* permeated the eighteenth century world. Based on the reception of the tale by society, one should not be surprised at the onslaught of Gothic romances which followed in the latter part of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

Walpole's tale started three new genres—the Gothic, the ghost story and the detective story—all of which are still alive today. M.R. James, the foremost scholar on the ghost story, saw Walpole's tale as "the progenitor of the ghost story as a literary genre" (37). E.F. Bleiler saw *The Castle of Otranto* as "the primitive detective story" with God or Fate as the detective (xv). Bleiler also saw the tale as an important source for the enthusiasm which swept the latter eighteenth century and linked it to the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century with "Manfreds" running rampant. As Bleiler writes of *The Castle of Otranto*, "it embodies the spirit of an age (xiii). Summers states that to Walpole's work, "we own nothing less than a revolution in public taste, and its influence is strong in the present day" (lvii).

In the present day *The Castle of Otranto* seems absurd with its falling helmets, walking skeletons and figures that walk out of paintings. By reading the work in an eighteenth century context, one can appreciate the sudden break Walpole made with the developing novel. The serious students of literature cannot dismiss Walpole's tale, for it sowed the seeds of new genres which are still growing in the twentieth century. Walpole's *Castle* built a new literary tradition which writers still inhabit today. ❑

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Composing

Ron Speir, Jr.

The rum and coke sits beside the computer--
The radio hums out a tune:
“Summertime...”

The keys soon begin to click.
Letter after letter appears,
And soon the words come,
Then a line —
Marked with a *return*.

The soul flows out the fingers
Across the cold keys
Into the interface.
The screen begins to fill...

The computer begins to process...
It feels the words,
Beeping at the missspellings.

The poet orchestrates the tune:
“Living is easy”
CLICK-click-click-CLICK-click-return.

A sip from the glass,
A renewed vigor.
Finally, it is done.
But without *saving*...
He turns the computer off,
Sipping slowly and deeply.

Untitled -- J. Bearce

Dreams of Flight

Gregory B. Ford

April, 1945. I walked across the ramp from the briefing hut: another day, another bomber escort mission. I stopped short of the row of P-51D Mustangs and drank in the cool breeze that engulfed our secluded English airfield. I gazed at my plane, with her six machine guns protruding from her wings and the off color patches covering the bullet holes she had received. Painted on the fuselage, below the bubble canopy, I noticed the addition of another swastika, my fifth. I had shot down five German planes. I was an ace. I was a hero.

April, 1969. Like other fifth-graders, my friends and I shared this dream of glory. We wanted to be heroes, but we didn't want to be firemen or policemen or even astronauts. We wanted to be fighter pilots and fly the planes that became famous during World War II. We read every book in the school library that dealt with aircraft and flying. We built models of our favorite planes and we even bought and flew the Cox gas engine replicas. Everything we did dealt with flying.

As time passed and our group broke up, I lost my desire to be a hero, but I never lost my desire to fly. I continued to read about planes and flying. I thought about the freedom of soaring through air, man and machine versus nature. But for all of my reading and dreaming, flying remained only a dream.

September, 1989. I walked across the ramp from the office: my first flight lesson. I stopped short of the Cessna 150 and choked on the heat rising from the asphalt here at Ridgeland, S.C.. Damn, it was hot! As I waited for my flight instructor to join me, I took another drag from my cigarette and gazed at the red, white, and blue plane before me: no guns, no bullets, no symbols of victory. This wasn't the P-51 of my dreams, but then I never dreamed about the butterflies that were churning in my stomach either.

I read the manual and performed the preflight inspection under the watchful eye of Oscar, my flight instructor. He was calm, cool, and collected; I was a nervous wreck. We climbed into the plane and started the run-up procedures. By this time, I was sweating profusely. Oscar explained the mechanics of taxiing and told me to move the plane forward. I eased the throttle in and mashed the rudder pedals with my feet. We rolled out to the edge of the runway, made a clearing turn, and moved down to runway three. If someone had been watching from the air, he would have thought he was watching a snake move across the ground: I couldn't keep the plane rolling in a straight line to save my life. "Oh, well, Ill get the hang of it," I thought as I turned the plane into the wind for take-off.

Still sweating and beginning to feel my muscles tighten, I ran through the pre-take-off checklist: nose wheel straight, flaps up, carb heat off, trim tab to takeoff position, radio call. With a final check of the sky, I grabbed the yoke with my left hand, pushed the throttle all the way forward with my right, and released the brakes with my feet. We were rolling and gaining speed. I felt Oscar's feet on the pedals, but I was the only one holding the wheel. At 55 knots, I began to pull back on the yoke. Shivers ran down my spine as I felt the plane transition from a ground to an air vehicle. I wasn't doing everything right, but at that moment, I didn't care. I forgot about my aching muscles, my drenched shirt, and my pounding heart. I was flying! ❏

Untitled -- T. Gallaher

On Seeing Gary Snyder...Again

Christopher A. McMichael

The world changes.
This I have seen
I have seen it
when the tail of a pony
has been cut short.
And skulls on a string
have been replaced by paisley ties.
But the power never leaves
No matter how much suppressed.
Its flesh can be seen
Pushing through the constricting
materials of conformity.

Middle Age

Deus ex machina -- Ron Speir, Jr.

"In me she has drowned a young girl,
and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fist"
Plath, "Mirror"

Long Ago in the Woods

Ron Speir, Jr.

I thrash through the drifts of pine straw,
Seeking out a hidden enemy
Who lurks behind the trees and bushes,
A phantom of my childhood world.

I stumble into a bare clearing,
Holding a pile of wood, stacked
In the middle of the perfect circle;
My game falls prey to curiosity.

The pile stands between two crossties
Eight feet across, four wide, six high;
Each log lodged snugly into the stack,
A half completed wall — abandoned.

Could the ghost have built it,
Starting a fort to defend himself
From my relentless pursuit?
I can think of no other reason.

I pull out one brick of the wall,
Not a brick from the level top,
But from the heart of the construction;
The wall tumbles down before me — victory!

Now I look back to those visions
Filled with the joy of imagination;
No forts or walls lurk in those woods,
Just ancient, rotting wood piles.

Just A Dream
Adrian

I dreamt
  that I saw Jesus through the Battlesmoke.

He was dying one more time.

He was talking to his brethren,
he was calling out their names.
He said that those who died there,
had no claim to fame.

I dreamt
  that I saw Jesus through the Battlesmoke.

He was calling out my name.

Shadows of Religion -- Ron Speir, Jr.

A Continuation of "Good Country People"

Catherine E. Nelson

Hulga sat motionless in the hay thinking about what had transpired. With each passing moment, her thoughts ignited a fire that burned until she was about to explode. The afternoon soon turned to darkness and Hulga sat helplessly in the loft. As each moment passed, Hulga became more and more bitter at the thought of her humiliating experience with Manley Pointer. How could this have happened? He was an idiot, just "good country people," or could it be possible she didn't know how to judge people at all? She thought a moment and thought, no, of course not.

Manley Pointer found the train station in the next town, hopped in a vacant car and was off to the next conquest. As he sat in the empty train car, he reached for the valise and took out his prized possessions. With the grin of a lunatic on his face, he examined the contents of the valise. The glass eye, the false teeth, and Hulga's wooden leg brought a sinister laugh to his lips.

Meanwhile, it was early evening and Hulga began to drag herself to the descending ladder. As she sat pondering the way to get down, her rage flared. The anger she felt towards Manley seemed minor compared to the strange feelings she was feeling about herself. For the first time in her life she was questioning the world with a totally new set of eyes. The thought came crashing into her conscious mind with a harsh blow. Hulga had been made a fool of by one with a far lesser meaning of existence and the disturbilng thought was her unimportance on the scale of existence. Sure she was educated beyond her mother's perception of practical need, and she wasn't a pleasant person, but she never considered herself evil either. Hulga suddenly realized she was a miserable person with a miserable life. Her surroundings were less than stimulating. Perhaps she should leave the farm and teach college or counsel the less fortunate in hospitals. For now, she had to get down and back to her mother's house. She would get down and begin her new life somehow.

As Manley sat in the train car admiring his trophies, he heard a strange noise, a screech of metal against metal. His last memory was that of his body being airborne.

When Manley awoke weeks later, he was in a hospital bed. He heard the voices around him whispering about how the trains had collided. Manley looked around him and everything appeared very hazy. He could not feel his legs or his arms and he felt an awful pain coming from his left eye. He was too weak to raise his head and evaluate the damage.

An incredible terror came over him. He suddenly felt helpless and at the mercy of his caretakers. He called out help and a nurse appeared. Consoling him, she said he would be alright and that with the help of artificial limbs he would be almost normal again. Manley shrieked with horror and fainted from the overwhelming news. When he awoke again, he felt an eerie presence in his room. He looked around the room and saw three figures. Once his eyes focused, he recognized the figures with agony.

The three women approached his bedside. The first woman had no eye om the left side. She bent down and whispered to Manley, "remember the old biblical saying? An eye for an eye." The next woman had no teeth; she bent down and whispered "a tooth for a tooth." Finally the third figure appeared close to Manley's face. She bent over him and whispered "Manley, you possess only one wooden leg, you are going to need to get another."❑

Written by Candlelight

Gene Nelson

As I crush the butt of
my last, stale cigarette,
I see myself in the mirror:
My eyes don't gleam as they once did
the dull sulfur stench of the burnt out match
still lingers on the air.
Perhaps I, too, linger although dull and burnt out.
But as I look at this pile of ashes
surrounding this burnt out match,
I wonder:
Ashes to ashes; dust to dust.
My memories.
Car and plane crashes; waste and lust.
My tragedies,
and the horrors of this world.
The candle by which I write
FlIcKeRs
Ever so softly,
And the life within me does the same.

The time has come for all good men...
Are there any left in this world?
Are there any men left in this world?
Is there any point to ask?
But as the light flickers,
And my hand grows weary,
And I grow weary of this pale gray existence,
And the last curl of smoke drifts
From the butt of my last stale cigarette,
And my pencil grows dull,
And my life stays dull,
We all expire at once.

An American Neighborhood
Adrian

I heard the sound of a machine gun.
Crack. Crack in the night.
The sound of tires squealing,
two race cars in a fight.
The sound of a young girl screaming
slap, slap
something ain't quite right.
Listen closely.
Can you hear the sirens reaching
out into the night?

Don't worry,
it's just the sound of a American neighborhood.

Can you see the steel gleaming
bloody from the fight?
Or the smoke come slowly boiling
from inside the glassy pipe?
Have you seen the feet that shuffle,
the eyelids nodding in sleep
from dreams that don't come cheap?

Don't worry,
just the sights of an American neighborhood.

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Savannah -- Americia -- Marius Ruja

Man's Search

An Essay by
Tricia Podmore

"O Voltaire! O Humanity! O Idiocy! There is something ticklish in the truth, and in the search for the truth; and if man goes about it too humanly—'il ne cherche le vrai que pour faire le bien'—I wager he finds nothing!"

(#35, Beyond Good and Evil)

"On the Spirit of Gravity" Nietzsche gives us perhaps the most valuable advice and insight into life and reaching the "overman" state that we will ever know or experience. While there are undercurrents of Christ throughout the work Thus Spoke Zarathustra this particular section gives the most exacting explanation of the belief that religion is indeed dead. Man has lost his creativity as well an individuality in the notion of "good" and "evil."

Man evaluates all of his actions, beliefs, and ethics by the invention called "good" and "evil." Evaluations, judgements, or values based on this invention eliminate all creativity, and man becomes a parasite of the earth much like the leech who sucks others' blood to sustain its life. The leech's only purpose in life is to suck the blood of man, thus narrowing its life to the point of blindness. "I am the conscientious in spirit" is a statement which shows how man narrows himself to blindness just like putting blinders on a horse (362). A man who limits himself only to the job-at-hand or to one subject can only find himself blinded to creativity. "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end: what can be loved in man is that he is an overture and a going under," which is why man can not restrict himself like the conscientious man and his leeches; he must be a bridge not an island (127). Men who bar themselves from any thought or desire other than the desire of eternal life in an unexplored heaven inhabited by a god no one has seen are parasites of this earth. The man who lives by "good" and "evil" judgements so he may die and ascend into heaven is a leech, a parasite to the earth, and gravity has won yet another soul. The convention of "good" and "evil" robs man of his creativity as individuality, and man becomes not only a parasite, but also a slave to gravity and gods.

Gravity weighs man to the earth just as the dwarf tells Zarathustra that his teachings are like a stone, "but every stone that is thrown must fall" (268). Christ fell and Zarathustra must fall also because to simply replace one with the other is to still pull man to the earth and thus cause man to "like a camel, ...kneel down and let himself be well loaded" (305). "O Zarathustra, you philosopher's stone, you slingstone, you star-crusher," should make man realize that just as the alchemists were trying to find a magical material to turn lead to gold, so is man in his narrowed judgements by "good" and "evil" (268). Man must be the "lion" and roar "No" to the "thou shalt" written on the dragon's scales.

Man begins at birth like the "ass," a beast of burden laded with " original sin." The institute of religion lades with judgements, "grave" words, and values that man accepts and refuses to question for fear of reprisal. "We are presented with grave words and values almost from the cradle: "good" and "evil" this gift is called," states Zarathustra (305). The entire precept of Christianity is that by baptism, in the name of Christ, man has removed his "original sin," but has man really unburdened his sin, or has he only begun a long descent? Martin Heidegger tells us that man is thrown into the world at "present-at-hand" and must get back to "readiness-at-hand," which is the authentic self. Zarathustra says man must become "the light one" (304). Whether man begins life thrown into the world, laded with original sin, or heavy with gravity, he must find his authentic self so he can revere life and be a boullion of gold, not a cheap nickel-plated trinket, because he has allowed himself to become a "last man." Man should not allow life to be tarnished, but it should be light, an epithany, or it should soar like the eagle who knows no gravity.

"'Yes, life is a grave burden.' But only man is a grave burden for himself!" states Zarathustra, but man must cast the stones off and learn to fly (305). "Earth and life seem grave to him, and thus the spirit of gravity wants it. But whoever would become light and a bird must love himself: thus I teach" (304). The weights must be cast off; man must crack the shell of the oyster and discover the gem inside— his personal pearl. Man must rediscover the childlike innocence of life and become "the light one." He must turn gravity upside-down until the rocks fly and the oyster splits wide open.

Life, like the oyster, can have a tough crusted shell which can seem impossible to open. At man's first opening he may only see a "nauseating and slippery" sight, but there are indeed "delicacies" that "find no tasters" (306). The "last man" is a nontaster because he only sees the slime and nauseating sight, unable or perhaps unwilling to search further for the pearl or to taste "the most exquisite delicacies" (306). They are there for the taking like a simple white gate that opens to a sweet, rose-laden garden.

The garden is barren because the herd of "good" and "evil" have trampled it until only jimson weed will grow. The "deep yellow and hot red: thus my taste wants it; it mixes blood into all colors," strives to make man thirst for chaos and lead the laden herd out of the "growing wastelands" (306). Chaos, the opposite of gravity, has a high entropy and therefore is more stable. Man must not "whitewash his house" because he is simply "whitewashing his soul..." (306).

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Mat.

23:27). Matthew's statement shows man's "whitewashed soul" because man is indeed a hypocrite when he only cleans the outer shell and keeps his heart and soul full of evil. Man betrays himself of his soul when he refuses to discover his "authentic self" and find total "openness." Man must accept himself in totalness with no preconceived conventions of "good" and "evil" before he can begin to accept others and love himself. "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" only serves the "last man" because the bridge must go deep to the soul's center not just embrace the shell of man (Matt. 23:28). "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: ..." also shows man that "whitewashing" the temple or soul only serves man until the rain of openness and judgement strips the shell away (Acts 23:3). Judgement must be within if there is to be an institute of judgement, but it must allow creativity. Man must accept himself before he can accept other men, especially a god because the "last man" is the leech.

The "last man" does not know how to love himself ; therefore, he can not love anyone because to give love freely is to first love one's self. He must rediscover the child-like innocence of himself and of his world. "And therefore one suffers little children to come unto one—in order to forbid them betimes to love themselves: thus the spirit of gravity orders it" (305). A child knows no "good" and "evil" until he is taught their meaning, thus causing him to become the laden adult. Like a boulder , the will is pulled and tugged from the earth, and again "gravity" has accomplished its mission—"the last man" with a "whitewashed soul," closed oyster tight, no longer a "will" free to create. ❑

The Psychiatrist
Melba Nelson Moore

Darkness surrounded me and fear lived there
And I was like a tiny doll
Hemmed in by monsters from my past.
A great void lay before me,
Across its depths a river ran
Made of whispers, mocking and accusing.
The light was over there and I could not reach it.
Then a voice spoke softly to me
From the safety of the hill,
"Don't be frightened, I am here
And I will guide you through.
Each day we'll slay a beast that bars your way."
He dragged from deep within my soul
The dread that fed their existence
And each day one died,
For it could not stand the light.
I grew as time moved on, and the beasts grew smaller
Until one day they were gone.
And the whispers died like vanished wind.
Beneath the whispers ran a highway,
Golden like the sun,
Across the way the voice called gently,
"Come over and I will take you home."

Bats around the Lampost
Christopher A. McMichael

Pieces of the night sky
Swoop down
to bother the light.
Drawn by promise
of prey found
only in the bright
sheltering glow.

Sounds of Silence

BJ English

Silence springs off of the kitchen walls
And Echoes down stair vertebrae
To thunder through the halls
Sending waves through water tank
That sullen sits in cellar dark:
Reverberating deep in sound
It works its way now underground
Lost in chasms of the deep
Where silence rests but does not sleep.

Silence human ears can't hear
Is yet not silence, so I fear.
Someone may whisper "help" to me
And I, deaf soul......
It cannot be!

Why be there sounds beyond our grasp
That sudden make us shiver, gasp,
When man made instruments unveil
Sounds of the muses' piercing wails.

Tomorrow do not call for me,
For I have drifted out to sea.
I sail to find the farthest shore,
Where silence stirs man nevermore.

Old Age

Father Earth -- Ruth Mathis

"Children picking up our bones
Will never know that these were once
As quick as foxes on the hill;"

Stevens, "A Postcard from the Volcano"

Winter Questions
Christopher A. McMichael

I'm walking behind myself
Through the littered fields
of the past.
White crows of paradox
scream from the
dead trees of winter
while the ice underfoot
Flows like quicksilver,
into swirling questions.
And the fire engines rush by.

The Farthest Shore
BJ English

Further away from the light he flew.
Further away from the misty dew,
Further away where the earth meets sky
To the farthest shore where man-gods lie.

Further away where the sun shines red,
He stopped awhile to rest his head.
Further away three trumpets blew,
But God was the only one who knew.

Further away from the earth's sea tide,
Heaven's gates drew close inside,
Shuddered their last and heaved a sigh.
God bowed his head, but could not cry.

Shadows of Humanity

Christy Cadle

The moon sits
At the peak of the mountain,
A blood red, angry moon.

Shadows in the valley
Call out,
Screaming their breasts, in silence.

The moonlight avoids them,
The stripped shadows...
Their essence has gone
The moon has fallen.

The trees sigh, offering comfort
As the shadows weep.

The sun dawns
Burning their souls,
Increasing their burden
They will succumb.

Still, at night,
The shadows return,
Raising their arms
And childless bosoms
And beg for the time
When the light will dawn
And return their bodies to them
As is right.

Until then, they live
Only at night.

Andrew Cox Marshal: Centenarian, Slave, Pastor

Excerpts from a biography by
CARL V. BUTCHER, JR.

CHAP. 1 CENTENARIAN

The French and Indian War was in progress in the year of 1755 and on July 9, Edward Braddock, commander of the British forces in America, was defeated near what is now Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. This event in history, according to Andrew Cox Marshall, determines the year of his birth.[1] ....

CHAP. 2 SLAVE

Andrew Marshall was born a slave on a plantation somewhere in South Carolina.[1] According to his mother, an unmixed Negro, his father was an Englishman overseer on this plantation.[2] For this reason the term mulatto usually accompanies the description of Marshall; technically this word means that an individual had a white and a black as parents. The story goes that Marshall never knew his father, who left for a trip to England and died there shortly after Andrew was born.[3] This event and developments shortly thereafter drastically altered the course of his life. In the words of J. P. Tustin,

> "It is asserted by Andrew that he had been entitled[13] to his freedom from birth, as his father had arranged with a mulatto person by the name of Pendarvis, before going to England, that the negro mother and two children which she had borne him were to be provided for, and the children educated, and that upon his return the father would secure their freedom. His premature death becoming known, the mulatto overseer managed to enforce a claim against the estate of the father, and mother and children were seized and sold as slaves."[4]

It is not known under whose ownership Andrew Marshall was born. He was first sold, through, to John Houstoun, Colonial Govenor of Georgia.[5] At the age of 16 Andrew married. Sometime during these years he saved John Houstoun's life and was promised his freedom.[6] Alas, a tragic turn of events would again alter the course of Andrew's life. Houstoun died in 1796 and with the executor's failing to carry out Houstoun's will, Marshall was sold never again to see his wife.[7] Overcome by this unfortunate and cruel treatment, Andrew fled and was sold again, this time to Judge Clay of Bryan County, Georgia.[8]

At this point, Andrew Marshall's life would take an abrupt turn, but I must share several stories of special interest that took place in his life as a slave.

While in the service of Judge Clay, a member of Continental Congress from 1778-1780, Marshall had the opportunity to travel north on official trips and was privileged frequently to see General George Washington.[9] In 1791, when Washington made his trip to Savannah as America's first President, Marshall was appointed as his body servant during his stay.[10] In Tustin's words,

> "Andrew said that Washington was uniformly grave and serious, and that he was never seen to smile during his whole visit, though he was always calm and pleasant.[11]

Another story of particular interest about Marshall was that during the early period of the Revolutionary War when the embargo had taken place in Savannah, city merchants paid him $250.00 to warn a group of ships that were waiting in a bay to the south. It is reported that Marshall completed this assignment and the vessels were able to escape.[12]

There were other responsibilities afforded to Marshall during the war and following the war. He recalled many of the details surrounding General Nathanael Greene's death and funeral.[13] Not only did Marshall himself make history, but he was also privileged to see some of Savannah's greatest historical moments.

Under the ownership of Judge Clay and in the latter years of the 18th century, Andrew Marshall's life, as was mentioned earlier, would change dramatically. This dramatic change occurred when Marshall found the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ who became his personal Lord and Savior. We will see in the following pages that this single most important event in Marshall's life so affected him that he would spend the rest of his life sharing his lord with others.

Quietly, during these days, there was a small band of blacks that were slowly becoming a fellowship that would eventually be known as the First African Baptist Church. The origin of this movement took place in 1773 when George Leile was converted and began to preach.[14] Leile immediately began a ministry that included travels from plantation to plantation sharing his new-found faith. In 1781 Andrew Bryan was converted and baptized by Leile.[15] Bryan's sister was the mother of Andrew Marshall.[16]

On January 20, 1788, Andrew Bryan was ordained to the ministry by Reverend Abraham Marshall; and it was also at this time that Bryan's fellowship was organized into a church that would be called the First African Baptist Church.[17] There is no doubt that Andrew Bryan was a tremendous influence in Marshall's life. There are some reports that Marshall was converted under Bryan's preaching and then baptized by Reverend Thomas Burton.[18] Others say that Marshall was baptized by Reverend Henry Cunningham.[19] The documented facts of Marshall's conversion and baptism were not found by this researcher, but none can argue that his life was changed.

Eventually Marshall found himself answering to a new master again. One report says that Marshall was sold to Robert Bolton from the estate of Judge Clay who died in 1804.[20] Another report has it that Judge Clay sold Marshall to John Bolton in 1803.[21] It was after this that a business associate of Bolton's, Richard Richardson, purchased Marshall and loaned him $200.00 with which he would buy his freedom.[22] Marshall took this loan and with his savings as well as his own diligence and ambition he was able to not only buy his own freedom but also the freedom of his wife Rachel, their four children, his father-in-law, and his stepfather.[23] These must have been glorious days for Andrew Marshall. He had spent approximately fifty years and what would be nearly one-half of his life in slavery but now he was free!

CHAP. 3 PASTOR

Following Marshall's conversion he began to assist his uncle, Andrew Bryan, in the duties of the ministry. He was not alone in this effort since another fellow, Evans Grate, was also developing in the ministry as well.[1] The following words from James Simms describes how this old preacher along with his younger aides ministered to their flock.

> The assistance....much relieved his arduous labors of the Sabbath in preaching and administering the ordinances. On those occasions the old bishop (as he was sometimes called) might be seen at the river seated in his chair (so the twowheeled carriage drawn by a horse and in which he now almost constantly rode was called). As the candidates were immersed by his assistant and rose again from their watery grave, his silver hair, smiling face, and hearty amen spread a halo around the scene. Himself gave them the charge relative to their future conduct in life; extending the hand of fellowship and welcome to the table of our Lord after baptism, in the presence of the ready-prepared communion -table, the members in their seats and the newly born and baptized all standing. At such times the scene was solemn and impressive in the extreme, as the aged man's words dropped upon the ear and entered the heart and mind, subduing the will."[2]

It was apparent to the flock that Bryan favored Marshall as his successor. Grate was more serious and devoted but Marshall promised far more ability.[3] On October 6, 1812, Andrew Bryan passed away after some twenty-four years of ministry to his church.[4] His two assistants, each being ordained, continued to serve their fellowship together for a period of time. Andrew Marshall would spend the next forty-four years, the rest of his life, in faithful service to this fellowship, First African Baptist Church.

There is much debate why Marshall didn't immediately become pastor at First African Baptist Church. He had begun a successful dray business about this time; it is this business that would enable him to gain his freedom and would supoort him and his family for most of his ministering years. Through his dray business, he also developed many contacts and friendships among prominent citizens that would influence and benefit him for the remainder of his life.[5] There is no doubt that his association with educated masters, President Washington, and these business contacts played a large part in building the business skills and people skills that were so important to the development of this man. So, it is possible that the responsibilities of his business prevented either Marshall or the church from a decision as to his leadership as pastor.

In any case, sometime in the year 1814 or 1815 the church appointed a day in which they would seek the Lord's guidance and choose one of these men, Evans Grate or Andrew Marshall, as their shepherd.[6] The following quotation is from James Simms book, The First Colored Baptist Church In North America, in which he describes the day of decision as related to him by Samuel Cope and Jack Bourke, two old members who witnessed the event.

> There was no preaching on that day. Mr. Grate was present, and as a meek and humble Christian man, though not very learned or able as a minister, he had won the love and confidence of a large portion of the members of the church; and so for the first time in her history, having to make the choice between two candidates for her pulpit, there was very naturally an event of some moment among them that day. Rev. Mr. Marshall seems to have had confidence in the wisdom of the church, and that his call was in the hands of God and his brethren. He absented himself on the occasion and went to the Presbyterian Church. At twelve o'clock the church proceeded to the business of calling a pastor, and many strong appeals were made in the behalf of the latter from the standpoint of the wish of their old shepherd, his uncle. Great fears were entertained by those of his friends who really desired Mr. Marshall as their pastor that Mr. Grate would defeat him; but when the vote was taken, though a large body rose in his favor, Mr. Marshall was found to have received a majority, and became their pastor."[7]

Andrew Marshall entered the full-time pastorate and must have taken seriously his call and confidence which had been expressed by his congregation. The church was strong and unified with many newcomers being added to her roll. Mr. Grate, quite admirably, continued to serve as an assistant and served in evangelism for many years.[8]

The statistics of church growth for First African Baptist Church between 1815 and 1818 do not exist. However, on November 7, 1818, a group met at the Sunbury Baptist Church in Liberty County to form an association of churches called the Sunbury Association. The member churches of this new association were First Colored Baptist Church (soon to be changed to First African Baptist Church), Savannah Baptist Church (white membership), Second Colored Baptist Church, Great

Ogeechee Baptist Church, and Sunbury Baptist Church (mixed white and black membership). The representatives for First African Baptist Church that first year in the Sunbury Association were Deacon Adam Johnson and Josiah Lloyd; they reported their membership as 1712.[9]

Obviously the Lord was using Andrew Marshall in much the same way that Liele and Bryan were used before him. People were being reached with the truth of the Gospel.

The church fellowship was also important to the blacks for another reason. Savannah did not offer much to the slaves since they had little or no money. Therefore, the church served as the social center of their lives as well as the spiritual center. It should be considered then that such a large body of blacks, most of whom were slaves, might have been a considerable threat to the white community at the time. This fellowship, First African Baptist Church, could not have escaped drawing attention with such large members participating in their gatherings. This scrutiny would eventually bring with it a new challenge for Andrew Marshall.

During the time period of 1819 - 1821, Marshall apparently was beginning to gain reasonable financial comfort through his dray business. It was about this time that he decided to build a two-story brick home on lot number 19 in Yamacraw and on the corner of Bryan and Farm Streets.[10] A problem occurred when Marshall, unintentionally it is told, purchased his bricks from slaves who had no permission to trade. He was eventually prosecuted since the bricks were said to have been stolen from a Mr. McAlpin. The sentence was to be a public flogging in the market square. It was not to be, though, as Mr. Richard Richardson, Marshall's master and friend, stepped forward with his influence. He rallied friends and business associates who were there as a powerful group on the day of the whipping. They insisted that the constable should not draw blood nor even scratch the skin and Richardson stood by the old preacher to see that their demands were met. The execution turned into nothing more than a semblance.[11]

In spite of this and other struggles Marshall's constituents loved him and supported him. The church continued to grow. In 1826, First African began the first negro Sunday School program in North America. This effort was accomplished through the help of a Mr. Lowell Mason who was superintendent at the Independent Presbyterian Church.[12]

About this same time there was a radical group called Campbellites growing in the Wellsburg area of what is now West Virginia. This group evolved into the denomination that we know today as the Church of Christ. Alexander Campbell was their leader and he was charged a heretic by Baptists in 1816 when he preached a sermon he declared that:

> ...the Christian dispensation was free of Old Testament law that was not reiterated in the New Testament."[13]

A Savannahian, Mr. S. C. Dunning (1780-1858), was a follower of Campbell and was responsible for a congregation of Campbellites.[14] Dunning and Andrew Marshall were among the first Georgians who subscribed to a new publication, The Millennial Harbringer, that Alexander Campbell began producing in 1830.[15] The story is beginning to unfold now of a major confrontation that will development in the life of Andrew Marshall, his church family, and the community of Savannah.

There existed a Georgia law at that time that prohibited blacks from assembling in groups larger than seven unless they were supervised or sponsored by a white or whites. Savannah Baptist Church happened to be the sponsor for the First African Baptists. The Baptists opposed what would come to be known as the "Campbell and Dunning Doctrine."[16] The stage is set for the confrontation that would develop when in 1832 Alexander Campbell came to Savannah. There he found the white churches closed to him, but he was welcomed by Marshall to the pulpit at First African. For several months the church operated in a state of confusion and disorder. This situation deteriorated to the point that one Sunday evening the city officers had to be called in to disperse the rivals and some were even arrested and whipped![17]

The unstable condition of the church climaxed when the Associational Meeting was held in Liberty County on November 9, 1832. Deacon Adam Johnson and Rev. Marshall were the delegated for First African but the Association refused to receive them.[18] This was a shock to Johnson who already in oppossed Marshall over the Campbell incident. The Association appointed a committee to investigate the situation existing at First African and on November 10, 1832 the following report was filed:

> The committee to whom was referred the consideration of the difficulty existing in the First African Church, Savannah, make their report.
>
> Your committee after a serious consideration of the painful and difficult task assigned them, would present to your body the following resolutions, as the result of their consideration:
>
> Resolved, that we approve highly of the recommendation of the council of ministers that was called VIA, That A. Marshall be silenced and we concur in the opinion that he be silenced indefinitely.
>
> Resolved, that the First African Church, as a member of this Association, on account of its corrupt state, be considered as dissolved; and that measures be adopted to constitute a new church as a branch of the white Baptist church.
>
> Resolved, That we advise our colored brethren in the country, now members of the African churches in Savannah, to take letters of dismission, and either unite themselves with neighboring churches of our faith and order or be constituted into separate churches.
>
> The committee recommend the public expression of this body, extending their entire approbation of the Christian deportment of the Second African Church.
>
> Resolved, That a copy of the above resolutions be transmitted to the mayor of the city of Savannah.
>
> Signed,
> Samuel S. Law,
> Moderator
>
> Oliver Stevens,
> Clerk [19]

Following this report, Deacon Johnson and Rev. Marshall rallied their opposing forces. The Savannah Baptist Church had recently moved into their new workshop center and had vacated their old building on Franklin Square. Marshall purchased this facility with help from his prominent white friends and all but 155 members moved with him to the new facility leaving the old property to Deacon Johnson and his 154 followers.[20] According to James Simms:

> The bold effort on his part gave him a great advantage over his opponents, and drew the people to him in means and numbers: and they met with him and prayed, if they could do nothing else; but he was careful to keep within the bounds of the law by having some friendly white person always present on the occasion of his meetings.[21]

Marshall's church continued to be called First African Baptist Church and Deacon Johnson's group came to be known as the Third African Baptist Church.

In 1835 Marshall and First African Baptist reapplied to the Sunbury Association for membership. A decision was postponed for investigation but later their request was denied. In 1836 there was held a meeting between the two factions. The meeting was opened and Deacon Adam Johnson of Third African Baptist recited the charges against Marshall and First African Baptist:

> ... proclaiming from his pulpit the erroneous doctrines of Mr. Campbell, thereby creating a schism in the church and among the people since; that Mr. Marshall had denied that he had so preached from the pulpit, and that from said denial a question of veracity existed, which, as the representatives of this church, he and his brethren thought should be settled; that they had no malicious feeling against him, neither did they desire to hinder the good among his people that he was so capable of doing; that they appeared there simply in the defence of truth, and all they asked, on their part, was that Mr. Marshall would make confession that they had not misrepresented or wronged him.
>
> Mr. Marshall, being called upon by the council to answer, rose with grave submission and, with his native eloquence confessed. He said that what Brother Adam and the other brethren had said about this matter was true, only with this difference, - that he did not say from his pulpit that he agreed Mr. Alexander Campbell's doctrine, but that being favorably impressed from hearing him expound them, when he had examined the doctrines for himself, if he found them true according to Mr. Campbell's views of them, then he should join him; but upon a more thorough examination of the scriptures, he saw no reason to change his faith in the doctrines as now held by his Baptist brethren.[23]

Feelings were being mended and healing was underway.

In 1837, First African Baptist was reinstated to membership in the Sunbury Association after denying any belief in the doctrine of Alexander Campbell. Rev. Andrew Marshall and Deacon R. McNish represented her at this session and reported her membership at 1810 members.[24]

Having led his flock through this tremendous storm, life must have settled down to some extent for Marshall. We must consider that in 1837 he had reached the age of seventy-five to eighty-two years old. The normal routine of preaching, visiting, and ministering would be quite a task for a man of his age. He had great influence throughout the plantations and countries around Savannah. He would often travel long distances to preach or conduct funerals. When he did speak in larger communities his services would be attended by large crowds. He would occasionally preach in Augusta, Macon, Milledgeville, and Charleston, and in far off places such as New Orleans.[25] It was not unusual for his services to be attended by the most prominent white people in the community. The Legislature of Georgia, in its entire body, even gave him a hearing once.[26]

In the last years of his life, Marshall had a dream to build a new house of worship for his church family. The old building was of wood construction and by this time it had reached a dilapidated state. The city ordinances would not allow another wood building to be built on their property; therefore significant funds would be required to build a stone structure. Looking back at Marshall's life and the many challenges that he faced is enough to understand why he confidently set out to face this new challenge. He had learned over the years that he had a most capable God and that the real challenge in life is to rely on God's strength and purpose and to avoid getting in the way of his work. Mr. Marshall led his people in laying the foundation for the structure which stands at the present site today. However, this must have drained the poor flock of their available funds since Marshall then made plans to travel north to solicit donations for his building.[27]

The trip would last over a year and would be very stressful to this old soldier. His wife, Sarah, accompanied him and they also hoped to see physicians along the way who might help Andrew with his ailments.[28] Along the way he would preach in different churches and would share the needs that existed back home. Marshall travelled as far as New York and preached in several churches there. One Sunday afternoon he preached in the Presbyterian pulpit of a Rev. Dr. Preston, The "Baptist Recorder" reported it this way in the May 18, 1855 issue of the Frederick Douglas Paper in Rochester, New York:

> I came to church expecting to hear a wreck of a preacher - a negro preacher - I found in the pulpit a master in Israel. Age had not touched his faculties, his mind is vivacious, and its workings are as true and faithful as are the intellects of men of thirty or forty years of age... This noble preacher had more points of power in that hour than I have heard in any sermon for five years. I regard him as the most astonishing preacher I have ever listened, when his age, his social position, and his illiteracy are all considered. No pulpit in New York or Boston but would have been honored by such a sermon.[29]

The trip wore on and sadly Marshall must have known that his body just could not endure such a schedule. He was also disappointed at the small amount of support that he was able to raise. He was rapidly declining and had been warned that he must return home at once.[30] He travelled as far south as Richmond, Virginia, where he was exhausted and sought shelter. There he was welcomed at the home of Rev. B. Manly Jr., President of the Richmond Female College.[31] This rest would not strengthen Marshall. After a month long struggle, the old preacher died on December 7, 1856.[32]

The Rev. William J. Campbell, who had been supplying for Marshall back home, was sent to Richmond to accompany the body back to Savannah.[33] On Sunday, December 14, 1856, he was laid to rest in Laurel Grove Cemetery South. The location of his tomb is on Broadway Street between Third and Fourth Avenues.[34] It is quite a sizeable structure and the large tomb also contains the remains of Andrew Bryan, Marshall's predecessor, and Henry Cunninghan who was pastor of Second African Baptist Church. ....

CHAPTER 4 The Man

Andrew Cox Marshall was obviously a man who gained the confidence and trust of those around him. He was a leader and was ambitious in a time when there was little hope for advancement among the black race.

Marshall was one of the most affluent and influential blacks in Savannah in the ante-bellum period, if not the most..[1] He supported himself from his dray business and ministered to a large congregation made up mostly of slaves who could not financially support their pastor. In 1824 his property value was listed at $8,400 which was the highest value assessed to property owned by any black and was also ranked higher than many successful whites.[2] When he died in 1865, Marshall owned four shares of stock in the Marine and Fire Insurance Bank of the State of Georgia; a dray business with numerous wagons and horses; a four-wheeled carriage; a lot in the village of Saint Gall; and his lot in Yamacraw containing a wooden building, a two-story stone building and a house.[3]

Andrew Marshal was also a father and husband. His first wife, as mentioned in Chapter 2, was sold away from him as a slave. Sometime thereafter he married Rachel who died on July 17, 1829.[4] Sarah, his third wife, was thirty-nine years younger than Marshall and became his wife shortly after Rachel's death. By his marriages, Marshall had twenty children, but only George, the youngest, would outlive his father. Jeremiah was born in 1819 and died in 1842 or 1843. Joseph was born in 1821 and worked with his father in the dray business. In fact, Andrew, constructing his will in 1852, left the dray business to Joseph. Joseph, however, died shortly after the will was written. The youngest son, George, was born in 1832 and further information concerning him was not located.[5] One story said that he lived his life as a bachelor.

Andrew Marshall had no education and it was by his own desire and ambition that he learned to read. His motto was, "Get wisdom, get knowledge, but with all thy getting get understanding."[6] The Bible was his constant companion and Dr. Gill's Commentaries was one of his main references.[7] ......

What impresses me most about Andrew Marshall is that he lived his life with conviction. He strived to make his life count for his Creator who most graciously sustained him. He spent his life serving those were oppressed, needy, and lost. These are admirable characteristics which any of us would be proud to claim as our own. ❑

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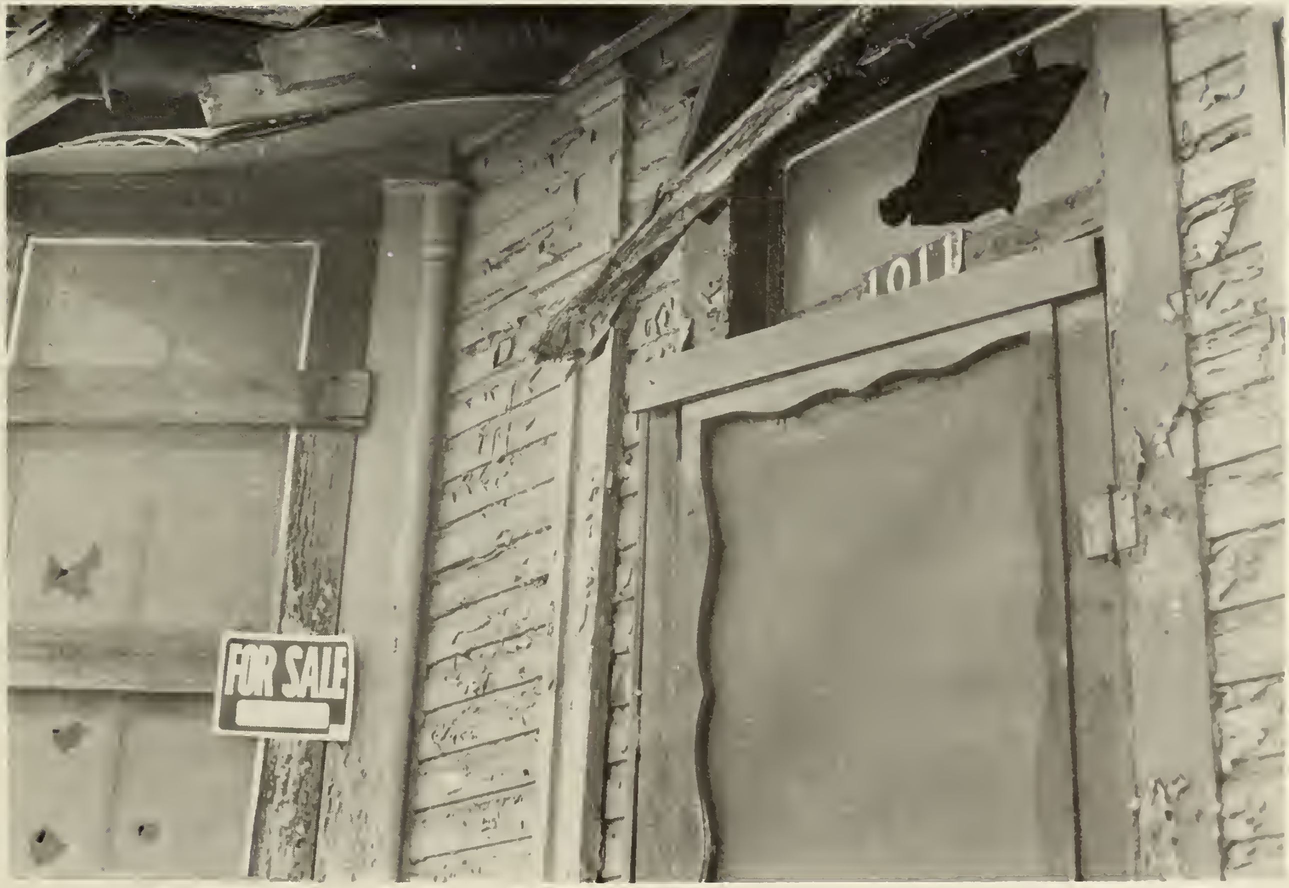
Untitled

Gene Lyons

give me forty-five cents —ASS
see you lying already. . .
I'm hungry
sleep right here in the PARK
Winter? . . . Florida
Why you ASK so many questions?
You high?
You look like a college boy
Computer science huh. . .
pay well?
give me forty-five cents
That's all I need.



Casa Mia -- Marius Ruja

A Friend In Modern British Poetry

An Essay by
Ron Shafer

Modern poetry has a distinct flavor of blackness. Readers of modern British poetry will find themes of futility, disillusionment, loss and death, woven into the works. These themes embody the confusion inherent in the life of industrialized society. Society is a trap and life within society is, at best, difficult. Most modern poets would agree that, to try to escape the harshness of reality results in falseness of life. We should face the adversity of life and if possible try to find some consolation. Consolation may often be found in modern poetry. The reader is, in some cases, "friend(ed)" (128) by the poet. In other cases the poet serves up adversity in mithridatian doses through his work. If this is done for the reader's own good, it can be regarded as a kind of friendship.

A. E. Houseman gives a vigorous defense of the gloominess of his poetry. In "Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff" (Norton 127-128), the speaker in the first stanza complains bitterly about the depressing nature of Terence's poetry. Terence's normal activities show no acute depression or anxiety. "But oh, good Lord, the verse you make / It gives a chap the belly-ache" (5-6). The speaker has no desire

"To hear such tunes as killed the cow" (10). He goes even further. "Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme/ Your friends to death before their time" (11-12). The speaker demands to know what sort of friend would make others endure such dismal poetry.

Terence (and Houseman in my opinion), replies by telling the speaker that he should drink if he doesn't want to face reality. There are enough people who are not linclined to face reality that "...hop-yards..." (17); even entire towns, "...Burton...on Trent" (18), have been built to fuel the escapism of the day. Terence warns, however, that if one follows this path he will "...see the world as the world's not" (26). Truth and adversity are close friends. Truth cannot be had without adversity and adversity brings truth with it. Further, escape is a transitory happiness. "The mischief is that 'twill not last" (28).

Terence speaks from experience. "Oh I have been to Ludlow Fair/And left my necktie God knows where" (29-30). He managed to side-step reality. Hardship vanished and he saw himself "...a sterling lad" (34). Truth, however, always finds cracks and seeps its way to walled up senses. "The world, it was the old world yet/I was I, my things were wet" (38-39). Shutting the ill out becomes more trouble than enduring it.

The advice offered in the poem appears in the third stanza. There is good in the world, but much more virulence than good. Therefore, prepare for the bad. If one "train(s) for ill..."L (47), then the good will be fresh and unexpected. Also, any hardship endured over time will become a mere normality as time goes on. Terence says, read my poetry. Yes, it is "sour" (53), but it will help you prepare for the "...embittered hour" (54). The stanza ends with "And I will friend you, if I may,/ In the dark and cloudy day."

Houseman states that his poetry is intended in many cases to be a quiet preparation for life. Through his poetry Houseman can sympathize and help the reader to muddle through. He suggests that his darker poems are mithridatian doses of harshness. The reader can absorb them and build up a resistance to life's adversity.

Terence is the case in point illustrating that the poet, through his poetry, can help the reader prepare for the storm and stand with the reader through the storm. In most modern poetry this theme treads subtly past the reader's eyes. In "I Found Her Out There" by Thomas Hardy (Norton, pp. 79-80), we find the usual modern themes: death, separation, bereavement. The poem still consoles the reader.

As the poem opens we are confronted with a woman standing on a "slope" enjoying the fury of the wind and the sea. The image is a romantic and pleasant one with waves driven onto the "purple strand" (6) by the "salt-edged" (4) wind. The second stanza begins with her death. We find that she is not only separated from the sea by death, but she is separated from it geographically as well. She has been buried inland.

> She will never be stirred
> In her loamy cell
> By the waves long heard
> And loved so well. (13-16)

Hardy makes a point of establishing with us the love this woman has for her spot overlooking the sea, where she can interact with the sea's power and participate in its beauty. He wants us to feel her separation, her longing.

Once we feel the longing, the solitude, then Hardy can befriend and console us.

> Yet her shade, maybe,
> Will creep underground
> Till it catch the sound
> Of the Western sea
> As it swells and sobs
> Where she once domiciled.
> And joy in its throbs
> With the heart of a child. (33-40)

The narrator hopes the woman can somehow leave "her loamy cell" and move underground to the edge of the sea. He hopes she doesn't have to endure a longing sleep separated from that which she loves so deeply.

I believe Hardy reminds us that adversity will make us feel as the woman feels. He prepares us for the hardships life casts at us by making us feel as she feels. But then he "friend(s)" us. Hardy hopes that we, like the woman, can overcome adversity. He wants us to be near that which we love, not separated by futility, not alone. He sympathizes with us, hopes for us, consoles us.

We find a slightly different emphasis on this theme in "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop" (Norton, 178-9) by W. B. Yeats. Jane is approaching the winter of her life, has dealt with hardship throughout her life, and has triumphed over it. She is also, shall we say, an earthy character. The Bishop urges her to change her ways, to "Live in a heavenly mansion" (5). Jane will have none of it.

Jane replies to the Bishop, "Fair and foul are near of kin/And fair needs foul..." (7-8). She speaks of life as a cruel teacher. One learns most in baseness and misery. Then in the next stanza, "Love has pitched his mansion in/The place of the excrement" (15-16). God has put us here where we wallow in the muck of life. This, needless to say, is an ugly outlook on life.

We have the hope of triumph over life as Jane does in the closing lines of the poem. "For nothing can be sole or whole/ That has not been rent" (17-18). Yeats, through the voice of Jane, tells us, as did Houseman and Hardy in the previous poems, that good and evil, peace and adversity are closely related. One cannot exist without the other, just as Terence stated. We cannot experience the fair in life without the contrast of ill. Nothing in life can be "whole" without the existence of the possibility of being torn.

Yeats "friend(s)" us by telling us that we can experience the good in life by contrasting it with the bad and thus better appreciate the good. Also, through overcoming pain, we become stronger and better able to deal with worse pain. Hardy hopes for us and sympathizes with us in our pain. All three give us doses of gloominess and pain in order to prepare us for the pain encountered in life. These three poets and their works are examples of the modern British literature which will help us prepare for the storm and then stand with us while it rages. ❑

Untitled -- K. Burke

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Cover Photo
The Human Progression—Laura Beth Cohen

Here

Cypress Giants—Michael Gadomski

**"Bitter? Man, I'm a volcano. Bitter?
Here I am a giant—surrounded by ants. . .
who can't. . .understand what. . .the giant
is talking about."**

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Prayer For Tomorrow's Child

I pray that you will never know
A hurt like that within my soul,
A hungry day, a lonely night,
Or ever have to see the sight
Of oil washed upon your shores
Or the horrible reality of wars.

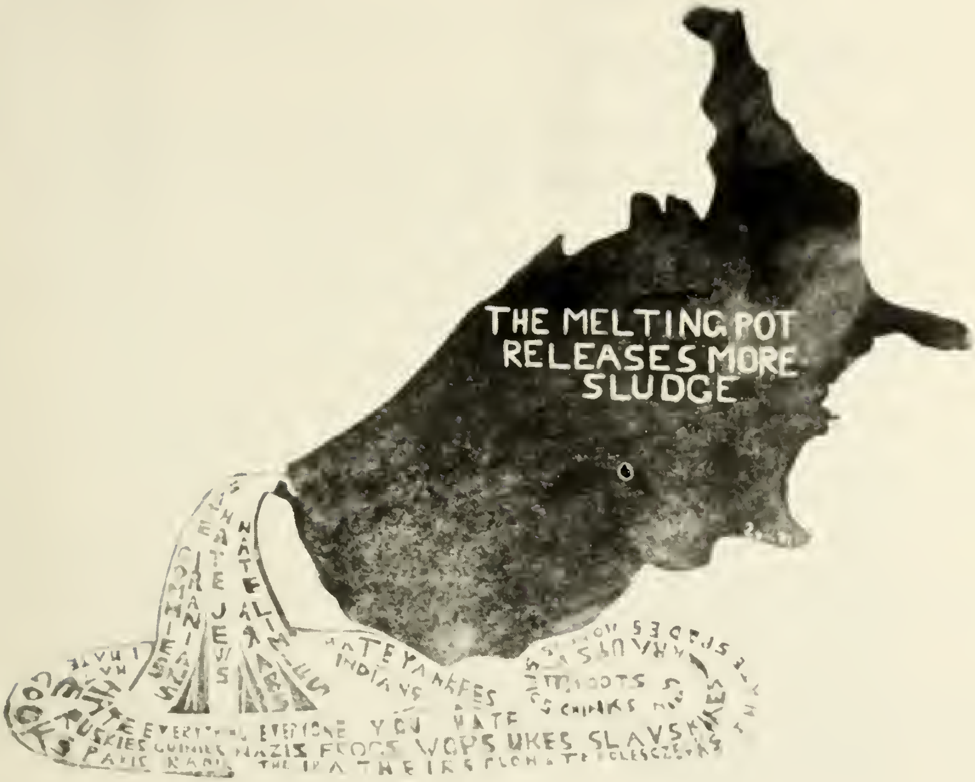
I pray that you won't have to feel
A desperation that makes you steal
Or a hopelessness which makes you shrug,
"SO WHAT! WHO CARES?"
Because you've never had a hug.

May you never know the aches of heart,
When love was crushed and then could not start
Again.

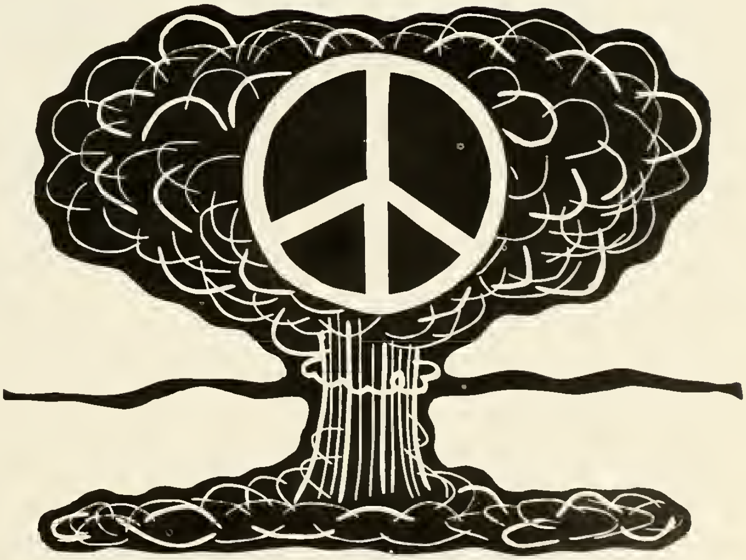
I pray for you so innocent,
Yearning to experience
Life, that you won't have to be
Like some who've come before,
Who for a dollar shut heaven's door
To make a mockery of Freewill.

May you bring Hope and never kill
The joy of peace, the peace of Love.
Then never will you fear the shroud
Of a homeless night, or a mushroom cloud.

Don Newman


THE MELTING POT
RELEASES MORE
SLUDGE
HATE EVERYONE YOU HATE
INDIANS
YANKEES
CHINKS
RUSKIES
NAZIS
FROGS
WOPS
UKES
SLAVS

America the Beautiful—Joe Hul



Peace?—Margaret Vishneski

In Extremis

You know
I thought the South
Was certain death
And
To settle there would be
My piercing grave.
Of dirt roads and
Laggard speech I would seek
An existence
A niche
Among the barefoot and
Backward I would
Strain to find.
You know
I imagined
I'd flee the South
Leave them all in burning
Hell.
But now I laugh
Because I know
I've grown
And the South is no longer
My morbid dream.

JHP

A Symbol of Pride

Greed for oil, power personal and stately
Is the breeze that keeps it flying highest.
Hand over hand it's raised
By myopic military nationalists who twist words
As the global policeman spins his baton.
Panama—home of the strategic canal.
Kuwait—home of offshore drilling rights.
"Don't tread on me"
We'll inflict a jungle raid
Or perhaps a desert storm.

Rally 'round, rally 'round, rally 'round
Just don't let its bronze tip and spangled cloth touch ground.

Red—the color of civilian blood spilt for unjust causes with secret ulterior motives.
White—the color of the race that sends its minority-filled forces to war.
Blue—the color of the skin of a rotting warrior (husband, father)
        fallen for misguided beliefs—"an effective way to jump start the economy."

Rally 'round, rally 'round, rally 'round
Bring the whole clan to the county playground.

Stars and bars and purple hearts for those who play their parts.
Stripes—Thirteen, thirteen, thirteen, the time honored numerology of Death.
Old Glory signals for the conscientious a new state of heaving nausea.

Rally 'round, rally 'round, rally 'round
Burn the goddamn thing to the ground.

A million miniatures waving in every government-fearing hand.
It's a soldier's job to kill his fellow man.
A tear falls from the eye of God.
Is this really
A symbol of pride?

gene lyons

Winner of the Lillian Spencer Award
for the Best Work in Calliope

Last Wish

Christina M. Cadle

Julia Burns wanted to die.

Lying among the yellowing sheets of her hospital bed, Julia could think of nothing else—or rather she tried not to. But there were always distractions, bringing her mind to dwell on other things, like her questionable life.

First there were the interruptions of the staff. They checked her temperature, took tubes of blood, and emptied the bag at her bedside that was a constant reminder of her embarrassing helplessness. And the questions. Always the same questions about how she was feeling—making it impossible for her to ignore the screams sounding from her brittle bones or the painful pounding feelings in her body. Purple bruises left by too many probing needles covered both of her wrists, further attesting to their futile attempts to "save" her. She wished they would leave her alone.

And of course there were the visits. They all came—loving her, blessing her, pitying her. Julia hated these visits the most, partly because her family was less adept at hiding their disgust than the medical people—but mostly because they reminded her she was no longer living; she had stopped living long ago. But at least they didn't come as often now, and they had stopped bringing her grandchildren altogether. Julia knew it was because she scared them. Hell, she even scared herself. She was only an alien shell of the woman she once was, hardly human at all. She understood that she no longer looked like Wife, Mother or Grandma at all. With all the machinery attached to her, combined with the smell of death that hung around her like an old, thick, black cloak, timeworn and motheaten, she thought she was enough to scare the devil.

She remembered the last time she visited her grandmother. She was only five, but the memory was strong even now. She never forgot the smell of her grandmother, a smell that permeated her entire house, a mixture of cooking odors and the ammonia she used to clean everything. She remembered her grandmother gathering her in her fleshy arms, and the old, too organic smell flooded Julia's nose, making her feel smothered and sick. The gummy smile and medicine-soaked breath came to her now, and Julia recalled that was the day she decided she would never grow old. She almost laughed at the thought, then quickly pushed it away. It's not funny, she thought, leaning back to blink away the gathering tears. It's not funny at all.

Julia pushed her chin to her chest and looked down at her body, which barely made a discernable bulge underneath the sheets. She didn't need to lift the cover to know the ugliness that decayed underneath. The womanly curves, the softness, the warm roundness of her body, all were gone now, replaced by some as yet unnamed figure. Still, she felt strangely comforted by the swelled and twisted joints and the bluish tint of her skin. She smiled vaguely as she decided it wouldn't be much longer.

At first she had fought death. When they told her the cancer had spread through her body, Julia had been angry, bitterly laughing and crying as she shoved the doctor away. She had clung to her family's visits then, always wanting them to stay longer. But not anymore. Soon enough she realized that they were waiting for her to die, that her slow degeneration was hurting them, hurting their lives. She discovered the visits were born out of guilt and riddled with fear and even anger. And Julia began to hate them. She loved their memory while she despised their faces and everything she saw reflected there. Julia wished she could leave them just as much as they wished she would hurry up and go: she was too tired now to love them, to care for them, to listen to them, to even like them. No, she was finished with all that now.

Still, they kept coming, seemingly unable to realize they were prolonging her departure. She had tried to explain it to them once, to tell them about her dreams for death. She told them she couldn't sleep; even though she grew more and more tired, sleep never came. When she closed her eyes, the funny little designs like the ones that follow a camera flash were there to keep her up. She told them she couldn't eat either; the feel of the warm, squishy food in her mouth sickened her. And she couldn't live anymore. They just stared at her.

What she couldn't tell them was that she needed them to go and never come back, so finally she could rest. She looked at their tired faces and sad, slumping figures, and instinct urged her to comfort, to soothe away their confusion and fright. But she pushed them away from her—she couldn't let them hold her any longer. She didn't belong with them anymore. They couldn't understand this, though . . . and Julia couldn't tell them. She sighed raspily now, and wished, hoped they would figure it out.

Soon, she thought, let it be soon.

Julia tried to shift positions, cursing the tubes and needles taped onto her body as they impeded her progress. I'm just too damned tired, she thought, tired of everything. And, as if to accentuate her mute words, the slow drilling in her belly began again, twisting her insides around some deepening hole there. Weary of fighting the pain, Julia waited quietly for it to pass, and waited for the time when pain wouldn't matter.

She thought again of her family. Julia knew they only came to make themselves feel better. They didn't really want to see her, not like this. Except Marie. Marie kept coming, encouraging her not to lose hope. Julia knew Marie was the one who would miss her—and that's why she wished Marie would stay away.

Marie had come again this morning. Beautiful Marie. She appeared for her weekly visit, dutifully attending the shrinking flesh and bone that held her mother. Marie didn't seem to notice the traitorous tricks Julia's body had played on her; the patches of missing hair, toothless mouth, and decaying features failed to capture her daughter's attention. Julia wished Marie would notice and perhaps be sickened enough not to return, for Julia dreaded her visits and the pain that followed them. Her jaw still ached from the forced smiles, and her head pounded from the army of memories that marched through her head the minute Marie arrived. And there was the unexplainable tenderness that filled her chest and moved up her throat to choke her every time Marie left.

Julia struggled to push Marie from her thoughts, squinting against the white light pouring through her window. Marie always left the damn curtains open, unaware of how the sun made the eerie green walls glow—and the smell— the sunlight made the smell worse. Swirls of Lysol and urine, now more powerful after being heated by the sun, swam around her, making her dizzy. Julia pulled the over-used sheets over her nose and eyes and begged for rest.

But Marie was there, giggling, "Look Mama, look at me!" Cartwheeling through the grass, squealing at the bugs that followed her romp. Marie wouldn't let Julia sleep. "Mama . . . Mama . . . . MAMA . . . watch me!" Chubby legs and cropped, curly hair bounced and twisted through fumbled somersaults.

It's so hot—too hot—Julia thought, loosening her blouse. And then a tired Marie piled onto her lap, her sweaty little body adding to the heat pressing into Julia's skin, pounding through her veins. The sun pushed her eyelids down, away from the light, and the hot air teased her smoldering body. Julia settled back and waited for sleep.

The squiggly body in her lap scared the sleep away. Julia tried to ignore the movements—until something wet touched her eye and tickled down her cheek. She peeked at Marie, whose pudgy fingers were patiently peeling the skin from an orange, the punctures her fingers made in the fruit sending missiles of sweet liquid onto Julia's face.

Mmmmmmm . . . Julia murmured as the next drops hit her lips. Her tongue moved, too slow to catch them, and they slid untasted down her chin. Her tired jaw relaxed and her lips parted as she exhaled, releasing a river of spittle that mixed with salty tears to chase the liquid orange to her pillow.

Finally, Julia slept.

Dream Epiphany

An impregnable blackness. Totally devoid of color, depth, or sound.

Then—a tiny ghost-white spot. Starkly silhouetted against the darkness like
a dot on a domino. I'm not sure it exists—

until it moves.

Twisting, turning, contorting,—it creeps out of the crevices of my subconscious.

It moves.

Slowly—menacingly—somewhat mockingly,
it crowds out the darkness,
forcing me to acknowledge its existence. Making me question
its intrusion into my sleep world. Wanting me to admit my guil—

and then it stops.

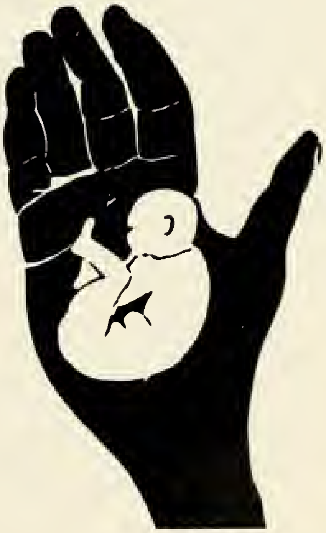
Dead center in my mind.

A baby-sized bundle of bloody rags.

Before I can understand,

The echoes of a dying baby's screams jar me into consciousness.

Don Robinson



Myn Kleine Baby—
Marjan Nieuwenhuie

Childish Games

Watch as the children gather every day,
A few will lead, most follow, some stand by,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Daycare workers stuck on little pay,
Change the babies busy Mothers kiss good-bye,
And watch the children gather every day.

The bully caught with out-stretched fist will say,
"He hit me first!" though all can see the lie,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Burned-out teachers reaching for the end of May,
Hear the morning bell and heave a deep sigh
To watch the children gather every day.

Students dreaming all week long of Saturday,
Don't realize how the months, then years will fly,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Policemen at the bloody scene will pray
This murdered child the last this week to die.
Watch as the children gather every day,
Their futures shaped by the childish games they play.

Ethel Butler Tuttle

The Fight

On a bicycle down by the railroad tracks,
he whips out his frustrations, pedaling wildly as
the dust flies up from his spinning wheels, when
suddenly—
          he is stuck in the sand.
The wheels grind deeper,
every hard-fought inch
only traps him in a deeper grave,
his face scrunches up in concentrated determination,
his knuckles white as he grips the handlebars fiercely,
his body taut even as he totters. . .
then,
with a final jerk—
                    he is released,
weeds closing around him as he fades into the pink sunset.

At a kitchen table in their one-bedroom apartment,
she clunks down a half-empty bottle with a thud,
scattering crumbs across the formica surface, when
from the far corner—
                              a baby wails in protest.
The chair scrapes backward,
she lifts the glass
and downs the Southern Comfort
in one quick gulp,
her face blank of any expression,
her eyes vague, unfocused, watering from the sting,
her body sways as she stumbles
then,
with a gentle scoop—
                              she presses the child against her,
shadows shrouding her as she stares out into the pink sunset.

J.L. Wineinger

The Fortuitous

The phalanx of greatness is replete with names
Of men who entered early graves
Leaving the mortal few who lived
To wonder what more they had to give.

What could they have done if they had lived
Any differently from those who lived;
They too with time would have grown old,
And lost that air that seemed so bold.

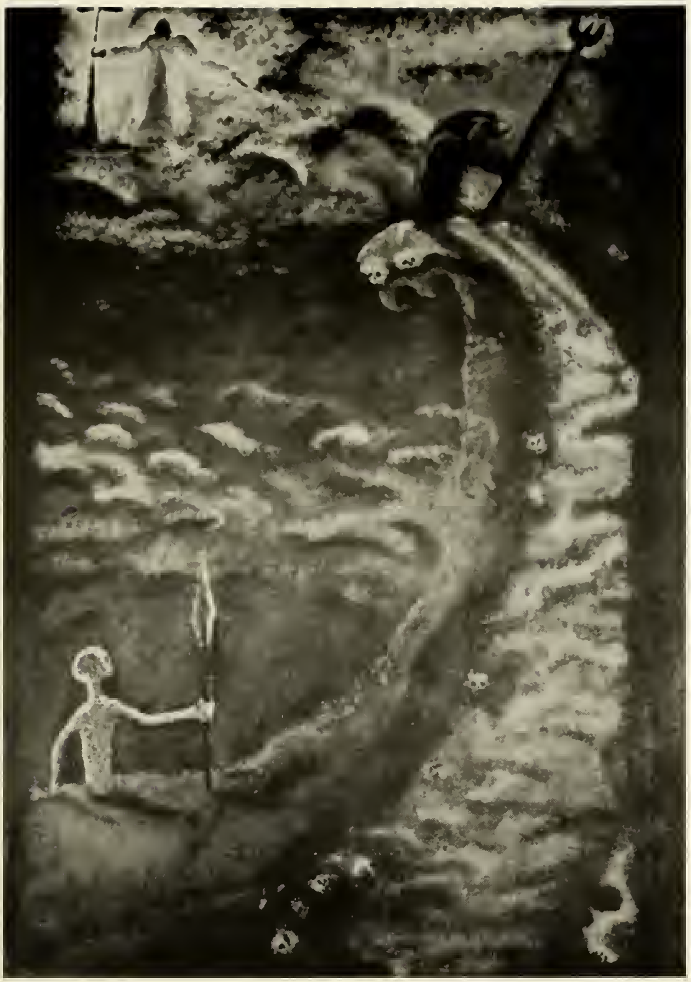
Fortuitous were those who went in their prime
For they live on in people's minds,
And those who stayed to get the gray look
Languish within dusty history books.

Vikram Kapur

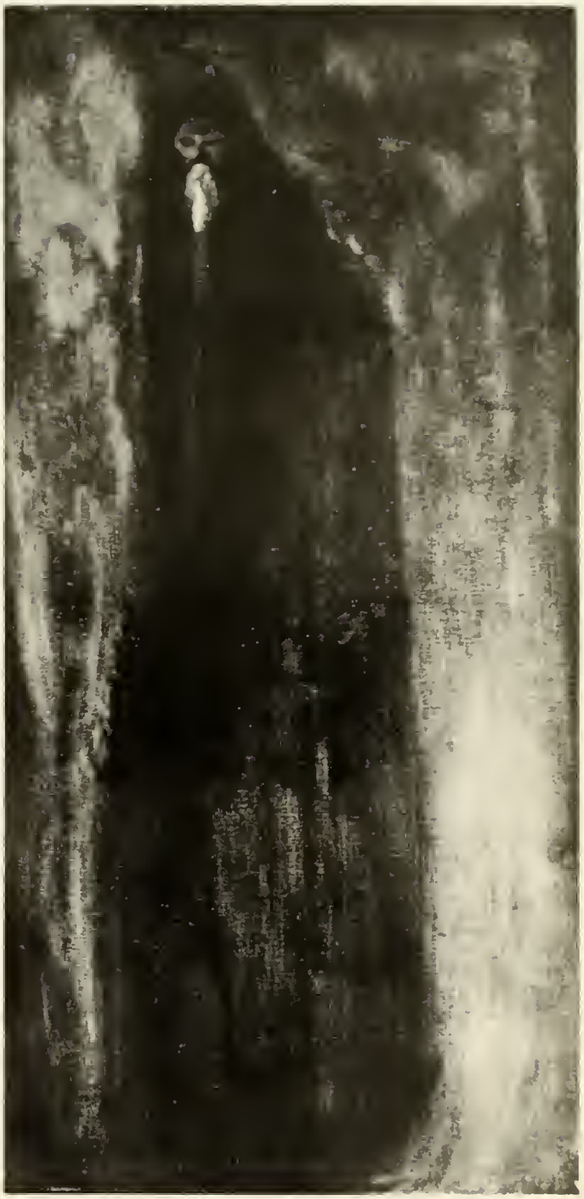
Spaces

I talked to this guy
He was dying
and he asks me why.
I say, I don't know man.
Please don't burden me
with your memories.
I have no spaces left
in which to put them.
Ah! Says he.
I'm not looking for a savior
just the favor
of a smile from a friendly face
as I have but one space
left, yet to fill.

Adrian



The Creation of Hell—Brad Squibb



Virgin at the Foot of the Cross by Eugene Carriere—
Acrylic Copy by Brad Squibb

Riverfront—Michael Gadomski

I Am Tired

I am tired.
Tired of being afraid of my fellow-man:
Of oil explorations and oil spills:
Tired of pollution (and being part of the
problem):
Of dead sea turtles, drowned dolphins,
slaughtered whales and clubbed seal pups:
Tired of the destruction of the rain forest
and global warming:
Of nuclear power, dammed rivers, and industrial
waste:
Tired of chemicals: in my food, my water, the
very air that I breathe:
Of people stacked on people and racial
disputes:
Tired of apathy, greed, and human supremacy:

But most of all—I am tired of being tired.

Elaine Hall

Unaware of the Missing

unaware of the missing pieces,
the children cry
in the distant sunset,
weighed heavily upon
by the winds of time.

splintered hopes lay quietly
resting,
fragmented dreams
swept away,
the glimmering cheeks of the children
cooled by the wind
then fade...

Craig Kozlowski

Ethiopia's Child

An imploded stomach
Hides
Under a small T-shirt,

A frail thumb
Sticks
Between two thin lips,

And puffy eyelids
Fall
Over the brown eyes
Of the starving baby,
Captured by sleep,
To dream of his dead mother's milk.

Ron Speir, Jr.

On Borrowed Time

On borrowed time
        we live our lives
upon a whim
        all may die
The dogs of war
        shall eat the flesh
The four who ride
        will take the rest—

to sacrifice upon the altar
        in worship to the God of power
and anointed with the oozing oil,
consecrated blood that boils.

Millions cry,
        though none take heed
        of the nameless, faceless hordes
                it seems—
as if in righteous anger wrought
the silencing of the lessons taught
        by those who before us found
        the virtues we so expound
        are a cruel veneer
            to hide the truth
        that peace is just
            an excuse for war.

Elaine Hall

Fool's Gold

You leave town at the first sign of spring for a Sierra Mountain trail.
And you walk to places where other men have tried to go,
 but where other men have failed.
You're high up in the mountains, with the clouds around your feet,
Shivering with the cold, as you anticipate what you seek.

You dig down deep to find the strength to struggle with one more ton.
And you know that death is creeping closer, when your day is done.
You're running on empty, as you start to feel like your life's blood has been spent.
Then it's a day too late when you get to wondering where your future went.

And that's just about the time you'll hear those mountains,
Laughing down at you.

There have been many good men lost up there in those hills.
And the late night campfire stories, fill you full of chills.
Each nightfall brings a thousand dancing prospectors' souls,
Condemned men still searching for their fortunes made of gold.

It's been this way since times forgotten, men want to get rich fast.
So they rape the earth and scar its soul, but nature laughs last.
They tear the heart out of the earth, never caring about its needs.
A man loses his perspective when he's overcome by greed.

And that's just about the time you'll hear those mountains,
Laughing down at you.

Don Robinson

There

Mannequin—Mimi Georges

"I almost love you
but would have cast, I know,
the stones of silence."

Seamus Heaney, "Punishment"

Sailing

When the lenient wind blows
I think of the summer day
I was at the helm when it
tickled the sails with steamy,
salty air as it pushed us up
the Skidaway River.

It was the same day
the mischievous wind made the
waves spit spray on us, while
whitecaps frolicked across
the wavetops that pulled the bow
deep into the Vernon River.

I fought the tiller that July day
the wind turned wild and the
bow shook water over us again
and again as she wrestled to
be free of the swells.

Not storm winds, just wicked winds
as Nature, cat-like, flexed her claws.
And I in reverence, not fear,
was glad I was at the helm to greet
the lenient wind
and the mischievous wind
and the wild wind
that summer day.

Cecilia Morett

An Aubade

The sky lies below a blanket of haze
As the night's cover is lifted by sunrise.
The waking sun will light the darkened shades
And you will rise groaning, rubbing your eyes—
And break my embrace when they see clearly.
I will follow and beg for one last kiss.
You will refuse—raise brows and say, "Really,"
But just before leaving press lips on lips.
I will wander onto the round terrace
And water roses that stand in earthen pots;
The morning breeze will drift against my face
And cool the cheeks the warming sun makes hot.
The roses release more fragrance under sunlight;
But somehow if I could arrest the night. . .

Vikram Kapur

Artists Passing in the Street

On a cool, dry day in the city,
I saw my reflection as I passed
a mountain of a thousand mirrors.
They're built that way, you know,
in an attempt to make those outside feel ashamed
to be so casually out in the breezes,
while the jaded, paraded masses within slave away,
near-choking, on the silk nooses they choose to wear.

Anyway, as I walked along, ignoring
the distorted image of myself
which gladly conformed to every reflective corner,
I glanced up and caught sight of another.
He, too, was enjoying the cross-signals changing
so that we alone could walk.
Times before, I'd seen him at places
where works of art gather themselves.
Also, while the remainder of humanity
confined itself to the glass towers,
I'd spotted him roaming the streets for inspiration,
as did I.
So on that late winter's day, we nodded,
each toward the other, silent acknowledgement
that we were prisoners of another world. . . .
But for the unreflected souls, peering down
from their shimmering, forty-story jails,
those must have seemed to be the glances
of passing royalty.
A king and queen of leisure,
Companions of the night,
Artists passing in the street.

Christi Manley

Trestles

Ron Speir, Jr.

I didn't eat lunch that day. It was Thursday.

The photography class I was taking for extra-credit my senior year of high school met on Thursdays, and we had an assignment due—our first "perfect" prints were to be made.

I met a classmate at the photography lab at 12:30. Since we had two free periods following lunch, our schedules allowed us to work uninterrupted until the 3:30 photography class. We took advantage of this unusually large block of lab time, and we were becoming good photographers because of these extra hours.

I made a few prints, trying to decide which picture I wanted to concentrate on and slave over in doing the assignment. Finally, I decided. This picture would become the best I've ever done and always hold a deep meaning within its silver and black tones.

It was a picture of train tracks on Hutchinson Island. One rail emerged from each of the lower corners of the picture, converging into a train track. Raccoon or possum footprints walked down the rails and cross-ties, leaving a trail in the creosote. Trees, bearing new leaves with the coming spring, bordered the clearing the tracks cut down the middle of the small island. In the distance the rails split into four parallel tracks that continued to stretch out, disappearing in a gray haze.

I worked on the picture for almost four hours. When I finally developed the perfect print, I developed one extra. I wanted to give the photograph to my grandfather, Henry Lee Speir, Jr. He owned a company that built train bridges and had liked an earlier picture of train tracks I had taken—a less perfect picture.

Granddaddy formed Coastal Wrecking and Construction Company in 1971. At first the company only wrecked things, salvaging the scrap for a good profit, but one day by accident Granddaddy found himself stuck with a contract to build what he had been tearing down—a train bridge. That accident led to a hard life of spending weeks in the middle of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina woods battling gnats, heat, cold, rain, and time to build one train bridge after the other. When he chose to come home for a weekend, he would come home on a Friday night and be back to the job site Sunday night. Since he was always working, I never really saw him for long periods of time, until right before his death.

One Sunday when I was twelve he asked if I wanted to go for a ride. I knew that he really just wanted to go to Dairy Queen. "I'll go," I said, acting like it was I who wanted to go get a banana split, "only if we can go by the D.Q."

"O.K.," he replied with a gleam in his eye.

As we rode through downtown Savannah, he broke his usually modest ways and shared a proud secret with me. "I built that train bridge," he said, stopping the truck near a train trestle. Continuing on, he pointed out another bridge. As we rode past the tallest downtown building, the Desoto Hilton, he stated, "I tore down the Old Desoto, the one that was there before this one."

Even though he was only stating facts, he acted like he had told me a secret. He had taken me into his confidence and shared a part of himself with me. His modest, introverted shell did not allow him to do this often, but on that day, he revealed his whole world to me—his work.

The next summer, I went with my dad out to Garden City where Granddaddy was building a train bridge unusually close to home. I saw him work for the first time. At that young age, I was impressed by his command over thirty men. He had them running from one side of the bridge to the other, moving cross-ties, lowering cranes, and everything else imaginable. I was amazed. A few years later when I worked for him for a month, I realized that his job was harder than I had ever suspected, and he worked others hard. The men worked as hard as he demanded, and they didn't complain about the dawn to dusk hours or the consecutive long weeks of working without a day off. He ran his business with a strict hand, but he rewarded those loyal men and bailed them out of trouble whenever they needed his help. He worked hard, the same dawn to dusk hours, and he expected others to work hard also. When I worked for him, I was not his grandson, but just another employee. I learned what hard work was.

I rushed home with the intent of eating a quick supper and taking the picture to his house. He would be getting home from two weeks in the Alabama woods where he was currently working, taking an unusual Friday off since it was Easter weekend.

When I drove into the driveway, my younger brother came running out of the house. "Granddaddy Speir is dead," he hurried to tell me. "He had a heart attack and died."

I managed to walk into the house. As I sat down, the phone rang, and my Dad told me what he knew. Granddaddy had just eaten lunch. He backed a truck up to the work site, got out, walked around to let the tailgate down, and collapsed. He died at the age of sixty-three of a massive heart attack before he even hit the ground. He died while I made that photograph for him.

The suddenness shocked the family. After the many years of hard work leading up to the perfect retirement, all his efforts had gone for nothing.

Looking at his body in the funeral home, I felt a weird nausea sweep over me. I was partly stunned by the fact that I could look at the body. The gray suit he wore made his face look brighter than it was, and the pale smile was forced, not the natural smile rarely seen on his lips. The large coffin made his thin five-eight frame look even smaller than when he stood next to me. His closed eyes looked naked without his wire rimmed glasses framing them. I wondered if the glasses were tucked inside his well-worn glasses case inside his coat pocket. Before, I could never bring myself to look at a dead person, no matter who it was. But I looked at him, and it wasn't the Granddaddy that I had come to know just recently. I remembered how he smiled that smile when he ate his Frosted Flakes.

Actually, he never called them Frosted Flakes. "Mama, we're runnin' low on Tony Tigers," he would tell Grandma, hinting for her to buy some more Frosted Flakes. Every morning he would sit there and eat a bowl while reading the paper and drinking coffee. Occasionally he would slip an extra spoonful of sugar on top of the cereal, and other times he would settle on some fruit that my grandma offered. Back then I didn't think anything odd about a granddaddy eating Frosted Flakes.

He never really smiled much. For the longest time one of the only smiles of his that I knew was from a photograph of him at ten years old standing next to Henry Ford and looking up with a schoolboy smile to see a similar smile.

Only a few months earlier I had finally earned a smile from him. I was in a play at school, *Waiting for Lefty* by Clifford Odets. The night before the opening during dress rehearsal, I severely sprained my ankle and had to have it placed in a cast. The next night, after keeping the ankle iced and elevated all day, I managed to hobble smoothly around the stage. I was so good that many people in the audience didn't realize I had a cast on my foot, my doctor included, until the reception afterwards. At the play, Granddaddy smiled, "Nice play." I don't know if it was because I was bold enough to stand in front of all those people—something he would never do. He was uncomfortable saying grace before dinner to a large group of people, even if they were all friends. Or maybe my stoic performance impressed him. Either way, he smiled that schoolboy smile.

But I later coaxed a bigger smile out of him when I asked him about Georgia Tech. He graduated from Tech in 1950, the first member of his family to graduate from college, and every year since, he would go to one football game. And every year I received a new Georgia Tech souvenir: a pennant, a stuffed yellow jacket, a seat cushion, a mug, a program, and on and on. But the day when I told him I wanted to go to Tech, his eyes lit up like I've never seen. "Good," he said in his most excited voice. Never mind that I wanted to be a computer science major and not an engineer—he wanted someone to carry on the Tech legacy. He even offered to help pay for college when he heard that finances might keep me from going there. It was so important to him that someone in the family go to Tech that I began wondering how he ever let his youngest daughter, his last child with a chance to go to Tech, go to the University of Georgia. After he died, the enthusiasm I had for going to Tech died. I settled on another school.

I took one last look at his smiling face before I walked out of the funeral home, remembering the final time I saw him smile. My grandparents let me hold an oyster roast at the house one cool day the fall before he died, my senior year of high school. It was the weekend before homecoming, and the party was to plan the senior class homecoming activities in a social atmosphere. Even with all the oyster roasts and low country boils I had been to at Granddaddy's, and all the times I watched him prepare the main seafood dish, I never saw him as happy as he was that day steaming open oysters, throwing them out on a long table covered with newspaper, and helping seventeen year old girls learn how to open an oyster that didn't want to open. I never saw him smile any bigger, except in a photograph in one of my grandma's photo albums where he is holding me—his first grandson—in his arms for the first time. I don't know why he was so happy that fall day. Maybe it was his dreaming about his first grandson being the first family member to follow him to Georgia Tech. Everyone in the family noticed how happy he was.

A year after he died, he and I became closer friends. I had to do an English paper on a member of my family I didn't know too much about, and ever since he died I had thought about how little I knew about his years before he was my granddaddy. And one day over lunch, my grandmother told me who he was before I knew him.

I never knew he was superstitious. He was so scared of black cats that if one ran out in front of him while he was driving, he would turn around so as not to cross its path. One day he ran across the path of a black cat before he could turn. He had three flat tires before he could get the remaining two miles to the job site. And he never started a work job on a Friday for fear of bad luck.

I never knew that he kept a silver dollar in his pocket his entire life. He had gotten the silver dollar for his tenth birthday. After he died, I saw the coin, as did many people in the family, for the first time. It was worn smooth and thin from being rubbed by his calloused fingers whenever he became nervous in a trying social situation.

I never knew he kept his wallet under his mattress. He did this for privacy, my grandmother told me. "Certain things were too personal for anyone else to have any business with," she explained, "and his wallet was one of those things." He even kept it under the mattress at home. After he died, my grandmother discovered three pictures of her in his wallet. She had sent him each of the three pictures while he was in the Navy during World War II. He never replaced them with a newer photograph.

My grandmother never knew that friends had confided in him for years. When he died several family friends told her that they had been calling him with their problems for many years. He never told even his wife that he talked to them.

One fascinating thing that I learned was about the house I had helped build. It meant more to him than most people knew. His father, Henry, Sr., had inherited a large farm from his father. My granddaddy grew up on this farm, loving the large house they lived in and the endless woods to wander along. He especially loved the river that ran through part of the farm, and he fished there every day. He decided at that young age that he would live on that river forever. During the late 1930's with World War II looming in the background, the Army came in and bought the thousand-acre farm for a fraction of its worth to build Ft. Stewart. His father took the money, which was still a large sum since the land was worth so much. My granddaddy never had a home that he felt comfortable in again until the house on the Ogeechee River was finished—the house on the river that he had always wanted. He had found the land the house was built on ten years before they built the house, and he knew then that was where his house would be. He dedicated his life to building a home on the banks of a river. But just when he was ready to enjoy that home, he died, losing everything those long days and weeks of work had gone toward building.

The Sunday after he died was Easter. A sunrise church service had been held at my grandparents' the previous Easter, and a similar service had been planned that year. My grandma insisted that the service still be held: "He would want it that way." As the preacher finished his sermon, which frequently crossed back to his eulogy a few days earlier, the sun pushed aside the clouds to shine across the river onto the gathering. All eyes focused on the rising sun, watching it rise above the marshes that the Ogeechee River snaked through on its way to the Atlantic Ocean. It was and still is the most brilliant sunrise I have seen.

Every once in a while I'll stop what I am doing. Following an urge deep inside me, I'll go look at that picture of the train tracks and try to see what lies behind that grey haze on the horizon.

Papa

I remember his eyes,
like warm ice,
gazing thru panes of glass,
and his skilled hands,
that I so loved and feared—

(though never did he bring to bear those gentle
extensions of himself);

I remember (with a sense of wonder),
how all creatures seemed to follow him,
as if powerless to resist his lure,
(yet he did not manipulate or deceive);

I remember his simplistic greatness,
so carefully wrapped in tissue,
creased and worn with time
(he was well-loved by Chronos, too);

But I remember most clearly
the day he left
to join the One who loved him best,

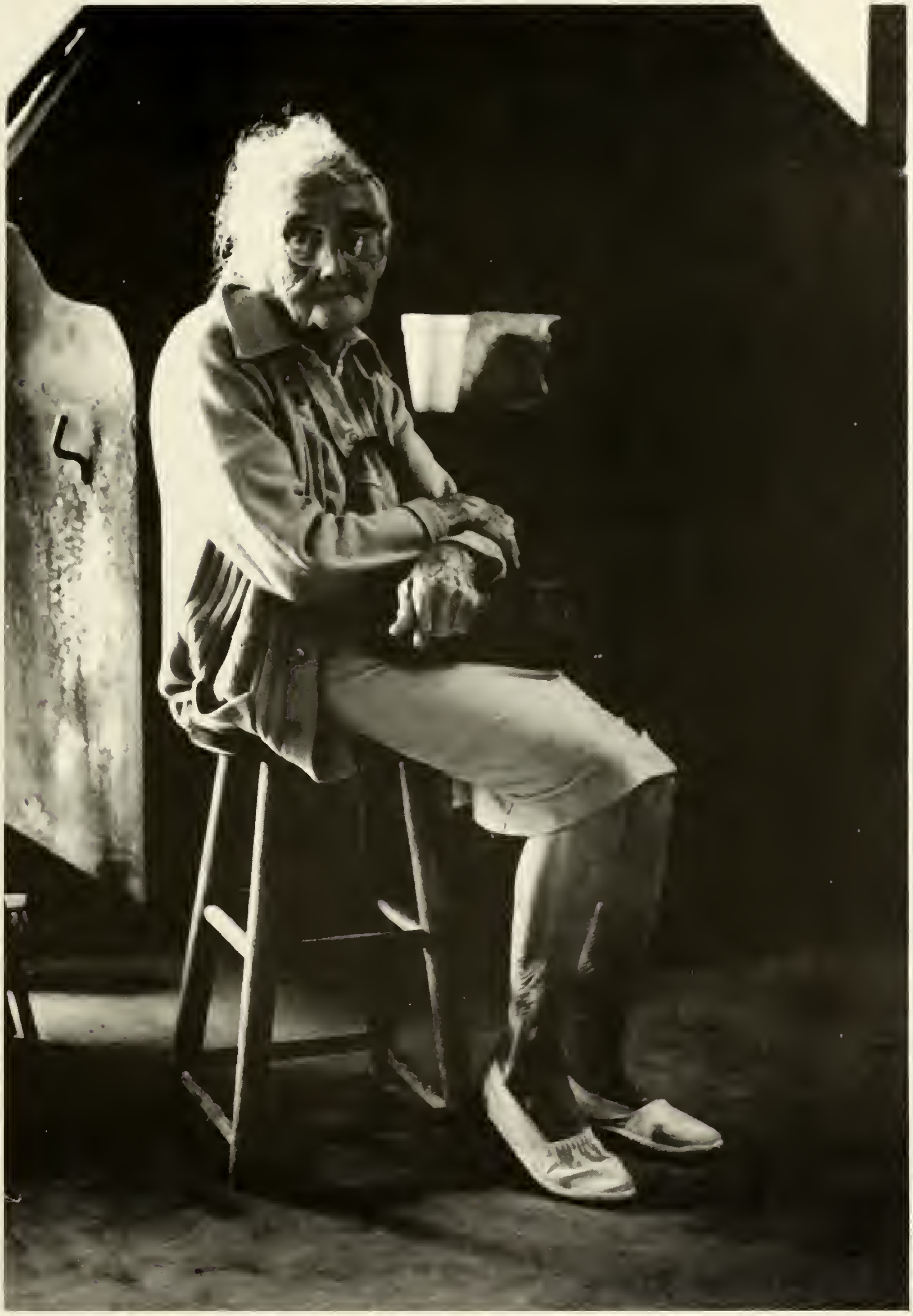
(and I never had the chance to say good-bye).

Elaine Hall

Life Goes On
(For my Father)

The sun rises
dew fades
leaves rustle in the wind
birds fly
cars go by
tides come and go
children laugh
radios play
flowers bloom
rain falls
dinner's cooking
a child is born
a cat purrs softly
chores done
the sun sets
tears flow through
another day
without you.

Marguerite Dismukes



Solitary Confinement—Laura Beth Cohen

The Comrade Griffith Show

Brad Squibb

Picture this. A dimension of sight and sound, space and time, apple pie and lazy summer days. A game of checkers at the courthouse with Deputy Barney Fife or a relaxing discussion of the nature of man with Floyd the barber. Aunt Bea has just put a roast in the oven, and Andy and Opie skip rocks, fish with homemade rods, and ponder the existence of private property. Communism has swept the countryside, and there is no longer a struggle between classes in Mayberry. Also gone with the "radical rupture" of "the Communist revolution" are Mayberry's "traditional ideas." You have just entered The Marxberry Zone. Dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee . . . .

* * *

"Gee, pa, sure is great that all the labor in Mayberry is equally shared now. We sure have a lot of time to fish together, but golly, so does everyone else! It sure is crowded at our private fishin' hole today!"

"Well, Ope, it's not our private hole anymore. There isn't any private property anymore. The Communists abolished private property."

"Why'd they go and do that pa? Don't Commies like to fish?"

"Well, ya see, son, the Communists fought for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class."

"What?"

"They wanted what was best for you and me and Aunt Bea and Barney and Thelma Lou and Goober and Floyd and . . . . "

"Even Otis, pa?"

"Yep, see, we were being exploited and only them Communist fellas had the clear understandin' to see what was goin' on, and to start our proletarian movement."

"Well, where are they now? How come I never see any of 'em?"

"Oh, they're around, I guess. I don't rightly know where they went after they set us straight."

"Ya mean, they came to Mayberry and organized the revolution and led us through it and after it was over they just left?"

"I guess so, Ope."

"Hey, pa! I got one! I got one!"

"A Communist, Ope?"

"No, a fish! A fish!"

"Well, now, son, that fish doesn't belong to you. That's a public fish. You have no right to claim it for your own."

"Aw, gee, pa! This no-private-property thing might not be so swell after all!"

"Well, son, us proletarians didn't rightly know what was good for us until we got set straight. And now it's obvious that we're better off, don'tcha think, Ope?"

"Well, gee, I guess so, pa, but why can't I keep the fish?"

* * *

"Yeah, Floyd, I could tell them bourgeoisie folk were up to something fishy."

"Oh, yeah, Barney, h-h-how c-could ya tell?"

"Well, ya see, someone with as trained and sharp senses as I have can detect these things way in advance. Them bourgeois fellas slowly and carefully resolved everyone's personal worth into exchange value. They converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, even you, Floyd, into paid wage-laborers!!"

"O-o-oh, yeah!"

"I could tell right from the start that them bourgeois fellas were sneaky and greedy and only out for themselves. They veiled the proletariat in religious and political illusions and substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation! Them kind of people can't help but exploit people politically, economically, and religiously. It's egotistical calculation! It's their nature. Just like the proletariat nature was to be oppressed and live a slavish existence of mere race propagation. And there was competition between the workers as well as the bourgeois."

"Hey, Barney? What happened to a bourgeois' nature when he became part of the proletariat? Did he have to change nature, or could he keep his old one?"

"Oh, be quiet, Goober! Anyway, those Communist fellas came along and nipped the whole thing in-the-bud! Ya see, Floyd, the proletariat movement was self-conscious and independent . . . . "

"But, Barney, that Mark feller said the proletarian movement was inevitable. How could it be self-conscious and independent?"

"Goober! One more word . . . just one more word . . . You see, Floyd, the proletarians were called into existence.'"

"O-o-oh, yeah!"

"But, Barney?!"

"Goober, just nip it, nip-it-in-the-bud!"

* * *

"Oh, hello, Thelma Lou, come on in! I was just putting a roast in for supper tonight."

"Oh, Aunt Bea, speaking of roasting, it's a good thing those fixed, fast-frozen family relations and ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions were boiled away with the revolution."

"Yes, for all that was solid melted into the air, and it wasn't long before man was faced with his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind."

"Absolutely, Bea, but why aren't there any black people in Mayberry?"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"Maybe Communism abolished classification of races and racism with religion and morality."

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"Ya know, Bea, sometimes I think the portrayal of women on this show is exactly like the bourgeois—a mere instrument of production!"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"What about the differences in age and sex erased by the bourgeoisie? And the Communist revolution that supposedly broke down all class struggles? Are we still basically copies of each other or do we have the power of individual choice or expression?"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"If the foundation of the bourgeois family was based on capital and private gain, what is the foundation of the post-communist revolution family? Are we in families? Oh, God, Bea! You might not have a family! And God!? Is there religion?"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou."

"But, Bea, is our system of values the same? Are all men equal? Is Goober just as good or bad as my Barney? Is Marx's theoretical society very practical? And what about Otis? Otis and Marx could actually be related!!"

"I don't know, Thelma Lou. We better wait 'til Andy comes home."

* * *

Submitted for your approval. A world of contradiction and parody. A world caught between there and here, then and now. Each individual with valid questions and seemingly few answers. But then again . . . . This is the Marxberry Zone.

Dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee

To Those Who Were

To those who were
. . . . Too blind to see,
may you forever see my face,
. . . . Too deaf to hear my cries,
may you forever hear my scream,
. . . . Too busy to help,
may time forever stand still,
. . . . Too scared to try,
may I forever haunt you,
. . . . Too foolish to do anything,
may my blood forever remain on your hands.

Heather Mitzi Crow

Kentucky Oak

Kentucky oak standing in the corner,
Tape at one end, scars at the other.
Soft tan grain in perfect blend,
A small crack was a fitting end.

An old man in a rocking chair
With sagging eyes and thinning hair
Rises from his seat to get it
And curses the spinning sphere that split it.

Cory Hill

Descending Liquid

descending
liquid
interrupted
pools quietly
in the night

the
liquid
runs,

purifies,
nothing
remains.

Craig Kozlowski

The Drunk and the Poet

I

“How do you live, O man of rhyme,
Without the sweet taste of wine,
Does your heart hunger not
For succor from time to time,
Doesn’t your soul crave to soar
To lofty heights scaled through drink,
Doesn’t your mind wish to behold
Wonders that Bacchus can bring;
Men of whatever hue or kind
At one time all are slaves of wine,
But you’re truly one of a kind
For escape seems not to seek your mind,
Do tell me what O man of rhyme
Keeps you from the quart of wine.”

II

“Though in this world my self is seen
My mind does from time to time
Escape to a world unseen,
And behold truly wondrous sights
Sights that so delight the heart
That it knows of torment not a part,
And leave the soul so deeply touched
That full of vigor it rises much;
Thus, in mysticism escapes my mind,
And needs not escape in wine,
But other than that we are both drunks,
For intoxicated you are with wine,
And I’m just as drunk on rhyme.”

Vikram Kapur

Everywhere

Far Cry From McDonald's—BJ English

"There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning."

Thornton Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*

Meet Me at Night

Meet me at night
Where nature and shadows are our only witnesses.
Where our minds shutter the cold, and skin is awakened by the moonlight.

Follow me through its hours
Where the rain streams to vitalize our desires.
Where touch moves in legato and passion uncovers its mystique and powers.

Greet me in the morning
Where the sun walks as king and larks announce his arrival.
Where thoughts begin to rest dreams, and love holds no blanket.

Dina Vogel

The Piano

A piano of long ago stands disregarded
In the desolate corner of the deserted house
    Unplayed, forgotten, remembering
The years the dove-like hands rested fiercely,
        Blindly pounding out a blatant expression by Bach
        or mildly stroking out a mellow medley of Beethoven

Once haughty about the artists who touched its keys,
The Piano now longs for anyone to come upon it
    with unstinting love to beat
out a melody ever so carefully,
        entertaining even no one or someone
        only to fill a world or even an ear.

Wende K. Carver

From the Mouths of Babes

"And so you would be a philosopher" the old woman laughed.
"At twenty-years and one, what do you know?"
The girl spoke without hesitation, as was her custom.
"At twenty-years and one, this is all that I know:
Wisdom is the retention of both knowledge and mercy
        in the face of adversity.
Love is best served when it is a dish made on rare occasion,
        but then in bounty.
Truth is to open one's mouth and speak with both
        conviction and compassion.
And Tranquility is the eventual alchemy of pairing
        dignity with vision."
To the learned maiden's dismay, the old woman laughed again.
"Surely you know more that that, at twenty-years and one!
This is the question, yes, the very point of Philosophy:
        What is Utopia?"
The girl's reply came slowly this time, as she was
taken aback, "A perfect world is simply this:
        To keep good company and pray to a kindly god.
To eat hearty food, dance with delight, and drink dark wine.
        Yet most of all it is this:
To have a shade tree large enough to keep
        all one's friends cool in summer,
so that, upon their leisure, they may disclose
        all idle dreams, worthy thought, and good talk.
        Truly, ma'am, this is all that I know."
This time her teacher did not laugh; at length, she said,
        "That is more than most. Go then, child,
                and philosophize."

Christi Manley

The Debate

In danger, close to the edge of the road,
He earnestly jabs at the stirred-up air.
Countering thoughts with silent debaters,
The demented disputant strides next to the curb.
Asking the trees to back up his argument,
He stops when his eyes meet with mine in the car.

In fact, does he see me as I wait in my car
And know that I'm real, lined up here in the road?
Or do I become like the noise and the air—
An irritant much like his ceaseless debaters,
A new set of eyes that arrives at the curb
To set him off into some meaningless argument?

Does his mind never tire of undying argument?
Can't he turn off his babble as I, in my car,
Can switch off the radio as I travel the road?
Is he doomed waking hours to spend motioning air,
While valiantly coping with ghostly debaters?
I sense no real answers as I watch from the curb.

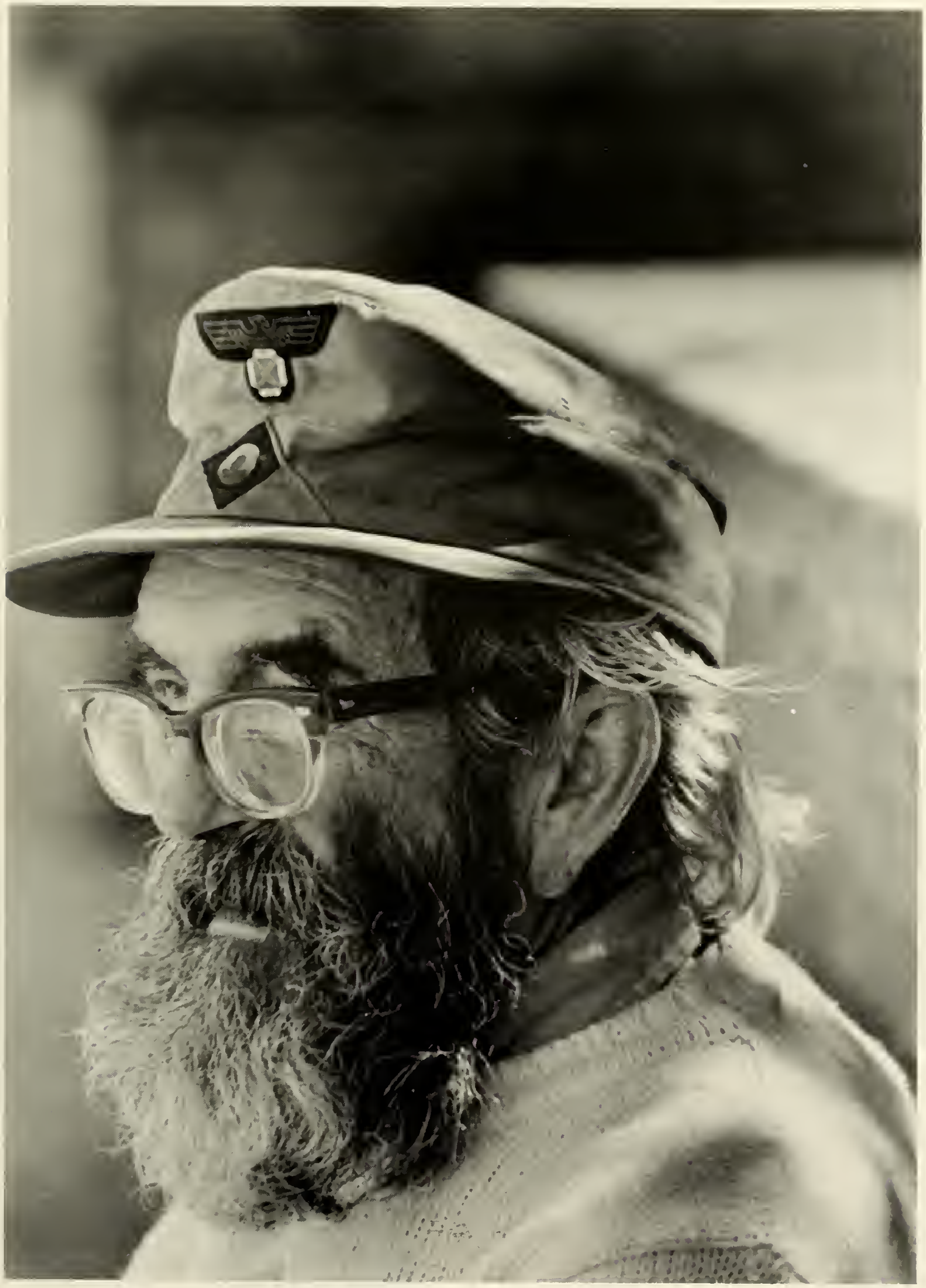
All alone, without keeper, this man at the curb,
With no one to bolster his ongoing argument,
Just drivers who stare, as I do, from a car,
Wondering why he's allowed near the road.
I voice my outrage while I fan the hot air,
While realizing we're nothing but idle debaters.

His face shows deep lines from his years with debaters,
Six inches of beard I can see from the curb.
That his clothes need a wash cannot be an argument.
Other needs are too hidden to spot from my car.
Does his world include places besides just this road?
Has he a roof for protection, and not just the air?

Again the demented man's hand cuts the air
As his tirade continues with persistent debaters.
I try not to look as I pull away from the curb
But my eyes won't obey, as though locked in an argument.
He's out of clear sight now, he's far from my car,
But near in my thoughts as I take off down the road.

Just a demented debater, arms flailing the air
In an argument that no one feels willing to curb,
Now in my mind's eye as I drive in my car.

Gayle Whitaker



Reach Out—Robbie

Speechless

Characters— Casey: seven year old daughter of Jeff and Dawn Stubbs, friends of Don.
Don: ASC English Major who enjoys writing, but often has "blocks" and becomes discouraged when trying to come up with something profound.

Scene— A gathering of friends. Numerous conversations taking place simultaneously. One between Casey and Don.

Casey: Donny, what's your last name?

Don: Newman.

Casey: How do you spell it?

Don: Well, you put two words together. "New" and "man." You can spell "man," can't you?

Casey: M-A-N (writing it down).

Don: OK, now spell "new."

Casey: Ummmmm . . . .

Don: You know what new is, don't you?

Casey: Well, let's see. It's like when something new . . . Like a new pencil is new, but an old pencil is chewed up and speechless . . . .

Don, with a bewildered gape and near epiphanic look, is at a loss for words.

Don Newman

Brittany—Mary Robinson

Just As I Am

I may not talk like other guys—
I may not walk like the other guys, but—
You still love me, just as I am
Maybe it's hard for you to understand the words I speak,
but—
you take the time.

I walk slowly, but you seem not to mind
You love me, just as I am—
When we go out you don't try to hide—
Nor do you seem to mind how people look at you and me.

You don't treat me like an infant, but—
You treat me with loving dignity—
I love you for loving me . . .
Just As I Am—

R. Glenn Moscoso

My Corner

From beneath the grasses shy violets
Peep and softly greet
The weary mother on her retreat.
Along the path to the trickling brook
Cardinals and Blue Birds usher with
Lilting refrains.

Strong ferns encroach the path to the
Babbling stream.
The fortress of Poplar and Hickories
and Oaks
Compel strife its hold to revoke.
A cordial Cypress summons repose.

Bright green leaves, melodic refrains
The gentle rhythm of the stream—
Refresh the winter dryness of her soul.

Like a dry sponge in an ocean of
New life She bathed in the tenderness
and grandeur
    of Her Creator.

Suzane Wiggins

True Love

This is the nature of
true love:
That you may see
the flaw,
And pity that your beloved
    had to endure its making.
That you may see
the flaw,
And feel anger that they
    who loved him before you
could not have saved the lover from it.
This is the nature of true love:
    That you may see the flaw,
    and, yet, love the flawed.

Christi Manley

War Memories

Lisette de Groot

Half a century ago, I was a young girl living in the Netherlands. It was a time of oppression by the Germans during WW II and although the population as a whole suffered, children led a normal life: going to school, doing homework and playing. At least, there was a routine. If the father had not been taken in a "razzia" by the Germans to work in a factory in Germany, most kids had a two-parent household. My Dad, with whom I was close, also managed to stay out of the Germans' hands, but there were some close calls. Living in an occupied country, where the people are not free to congregate, where one has to be careful when talking to a friend because a traitor might overhear something, creates tension. This tension influences behavior in adults as well as children. Nevertheless, it also brings families closer together.

When war broke out on May 10, 1940, our family lived in a small town not far from the Hague and Leiden, where my father was stationed in the Dutch Army. At about 4 A.M., we were awakened by the droning of hundreds of airplanes on their way to bomb the city of Rotterdam. It was soon light, and overhead the sky looked black. Feeling overwhelmed, my father decided to take action. Dressed in his Army uniform, he stood in the middle of the street, his gun aimed at the airplanes. "If I could just hit the gastank," he said, "there would be one airplane less." Although he tried for quite some time, he was not successful. Disappointed, he came back inside. Then, we watched the first Dutch fighter plane being shot down, falling helplessly and burning to the ground. The pilot parachuted down and was later treated in a make-shift hospital down the street. I was impressed and subdued, seeing the stretcher with the wounded man carried inside. We had watched it all thru the small window in our front door, while shooting was going on, not realizing that it was dangerous. We could easily have been hurt! As the war continued, people learned how to protect themselves by going into the cellar or in a closet or bathroom. Sometimes only the bathroom walls of a house were left standing, but people would still be alive!

After Holland had capitulated after just a few days, life continued. Gradually, we were surrounded by German soldiers who marched singing thru the streets, who confiscated homes for offices, and later bicycles as well. A bicycle was the main vehicle of transportation. If one lost that, it meant walking to get groceries, or to visit friends and family. I remember toward the end of the war that my mother asked my Dad specifically whether she could use her bike to go to the store. It seemed safe, because no bikes had been confiscated lately. So off my mother went. To her surprise, when she reached the corner of Main Street, a young German soldier ordered her off her bike, saying, "Give it to me," and peddled away. Goodbye, bike! Mother was very angry and upset! And this bike was still in good condition, although it no longer had regular tires. My father was always fooling with bicycles. People were riding bikes without tires, with wooden tires, and also tires made out of rubber garden hose. Our bikes had double garden hose tires: one inside another. My father's proud invention!

In September of 1944, we lived with my grandmother and her lady friend/companion in a big house in the center of Holland near Arnhem. It seemed safer to move there from the western part of the country and we would be closer to the farms for food supply. That month was the big attempt by the allied forces to conquer Arnhem, which lies on the Rhine river. From the kitchen window we watched hundreds of parachutists coming down in a field somewhere in Arnhem. Imagine the tremendous excitement! Even though a big battle lay ahead, we anticipated liberation in a few days. But it was not to be, and everyone was immensely disappointed. The Germans were not giving up; Arnhem was practically destroyed and its people had been evacuated right before the start of the battle. Our house was filled with evacuees, our relatives from Arnhem, but after a few days the Germans ordered all to leave town, except for my other grandmother who was allowed to stay because of her age. It was a desolate sight to see them leave, parents walking with small children and few belongings. Would we ever see them again, and where would they find a place to stay? So many questions and fears of the unknown. After the disappointment of the failed liberation attempt, followed by the separation from our relatives, a feeling of desolation set in. Yet, we had to try to make the best of it, and grin and bear it.

Pretty soon the household chores of day to day living kept everyone busy. All schools were closed now, but after a short time about ten or twelve children were given daily lessons to prepare them for high school, actually the 7th grade. We met in a room of the local gas factory for a while, also in the garage of the doctor whose son was in our class. It was fortunate that our teacher was willing to do this, although the parents probably paid him with cash or food. Now and then our village was attacked by projectiles shot from tanks. My father had instructed me how to protect myself. "When you hear the boom, boom, boom, in the distance," he said, "you have to listen to the direction of the sound, so that if the building gets hit, the wall will protect you instead of falling upon you." After the boom, boom, boom, one also hears the whistling sound, followed by the impact. So sure enough, one day, while walking to school (the gas factory), I heard the dreaded boom, boom, boom sound, like distant thunder. Quickly I ran to the other side of the street, lying down flat on the ground against the wall of a big building. More children and adults came and also lay down. How proud I felt that I had taken the initiative and done the right thing! Although we were scared, the bombs did not fall in that street, but a couple of blocks away. Meanwhile, I had to move a few inches several times to make room for the others, until I was almost with my nose in a dog's droppings. I did not particularly care for it, but reasoned laconically that it was still better than being killed. As soon as the scary whistling and explosions stopped, everyone got up and went on his way, as if nothing had happened. One tries to harden inside and act stoically. It is the best attitude, for otherwise one would fall apart.

In order to survive, there were many chores to do. One of the chores in those days was standing in line for bread or milk. The milk by then was very thin and bluish looking. Absolutely no-fat milk, without added milk solids as we have today. Everyone came with his own container, like a pitcher or pan. Sometimes we stood in line for a long time, and when it was our turn finally, or almost finally, the milk supply had run out so that we went home empty-handed. One time I remember clearly. My mother was expecting and sent me out to get the milk. When I arrived at the store, there was already a long line of people waiting. Everyone waited patiently that day and made small-talk. Suddenly, the storekeeper came outside and announced: "Anyone who is expecting may come to the head of the line." Immediately I went to the front, but the whole line of people roared with laughter. Here was this eleven year old girl, trying to get ahead, who apparently was not pregnant! How embarrassing! All I could mumble was: "But it is for my mother who is expecting." Apparently there was enough milk for that day, so I had to get back in my place in the line. The people had a short moment of laughter, thereby momentarily forgetting hardships. Although on this occasion I was the butt of the joke and didn't mean to be, or cared for it, I can now appreciate the humor.

What was very difficult for children as well as adults, was not to give oneself away when soldiers came knocking at the door to look for the man in the house. Those were anxious moments for all. My father became careless one day and stood in the living room when the soldiers passed our house. The Germans actually had seen the glimmer of my father's watch crystal. Luckily, we had also noticed them, so Dad hid under the floor of the house. To do this, he went in the coat closet, lifted up the linoleum, removed the cover of the square entrance to the low crawlspace, and then mother quickly replaced the cover and the linoleum. All this had to be done in a jiffy, because we couldn't let the Germans wait at the front door. They were knocking impatiently, shouting: "Open the door, NOW!" Coming inside, they were very determined to find my father. They looked in every closet, went upstairs looking everywhere, came back downstairs, and checked the coatcloset three times! They insisted they had seen him, but mother told them they were wrong; her husband was working in Germany. Finally they departed. Meanwhile, my father sweated it out underground and almost gave himself away because he had to cough. He thought he would burst! From then on he was very careful not to show himself in the front of the house. We were all so relieved that he had this narrow escape. I learned during the war that lying or hiding the truth from the enemy is permissible when you have to protect yourself. At other times, a lie told would result in punishment. Yet, some people used the war as an excuse when they lied, claiming they were unable to learn right from wrong.

The "hunger winter" of 1944-45 was a cold and dark winter. Cold, because there was no more coal to burn in the stoves. People cut down trees if they could (it was not allowed) for firewood, or anything else that would burn, like gate posts, and old door, etc. The cooking was done on a flat-top stove in the living room. Dark, because we had no electricity and the Germans had ordered all windows darkened at night to hinder the allies. No light was allowed to shine thru the curtains. On December 1, when my brother was born, there was a knocking on the front door. My father threw all caution aside and opened the door himself. Two German soldiers stepped inside. Immediately they wanted to go upstairs, but my father stood in the way explaining that his wife was in labor. The soldiers brushed him aside and quickly went up the stairs, entering the room next to my mother's. In that room stood a burning candle on the shelf of the washstand, its light reflected in a mirror and shining thru a small opening of the dark curtains. The soldier quickly closed the curtains completely and gave a warning that it should not happen again. Both soldiers left. My father was much relieved, because he had been unwise to face the Germans instead of hiding. The Germans could easily have taken him.

Evenings were spent in the kitchen, the warmest place of the house. There was a small gaslight, although at 10 P.M. it was shut off by the authorities. The family played many card games around the kitchen table. My grandmother knitted house slippers, sweaters, anything. Old garments were unraveled to be made into new apparel. Food was very scarce. There was no meat and we ate sugarbeets daily. Also fodderbeets, which were a little less sweet. Eel-baskets were set out in the creek that ran thru our yard, and big, fat eels were caught. It was my father's duty to kill and skin the eels. The eels would be slithering with their heads up over the patio, making a "kah-kah" sound. Dad, who was very sensitive and hated this job, would grab an eel to chop its head off. The eel would wriggle its whole body around my father's arm, making the task difficult. I would watch my father's and the eel's struggle. Finally, the eels were chopped in five-inch pieces and then fried in a pan with a lid, because those pieces were still wriggling and jumping. The meat tasted delicious. It was very greasy, but we all had a need for fat.

There was another occasion when we had meat. This time my Dad shot a big, fat wood pigeon out of a blue spruce with his air-gun. He was so surprised at his own skill. Dad plucked the bird, Mother cooked it, but when we set down for dinner, Dad could not bring himself to even taste it.

Gradually, the winter turned into spring. The Allied forces were coming closer again to liberate the northern part of Holland. Finally, our town came under fire. By now water also was shut off. We decided it would be safer to sleep in the cellar. There were ten adults and three children, with my brother sleeping in the cradle. A big ceramic pot, normally used to put up sauerkraut, was used for a toilet, and stood in a corner of the cellar. An older gentleman evacuee refused to use it; instead he went upstairs to the bathroom, in between the shootings. He was quite deaf, so maybe he was not as disturbed by all the noise and danger as we were. The cellar was directly underneath the kitchen. When the grenade bombs shot by allied tanks hit the kitchen, there was a cacophonic sound of the bomb explosion, bricks falling, as well as the clattering noise of pans knocked down from shelves. One grenade landed right close to the protected cellar window into the septic tank. Splash!! This was a so-called "blind-runner," meaning a bomb that did not explode on impact. Then suddenly, we heard water running after a bomb hit. Quickly, my father located the main water line and closed the faucet. The water stopped running. Finally, after five nights and four days the allies were in town! It was a beautiful spring day, April 16. My father had already pushed open the cellar door. This was not easy, because a five inch layer of rubble was on the kitchen floor. The roof was gone and he looked straight into a blue sky. Looking at the damage, he also noticed that the aquarium sitting on top of a cabinet was broken. All the water had run out. Dad realized then that the leaking water pipe had actually been the water running out of the aquarium. By coincidence the sound of running water stopped at the same time that the faucet was turned off. Because of nerves, nobody had remembered that we had been without water for days!

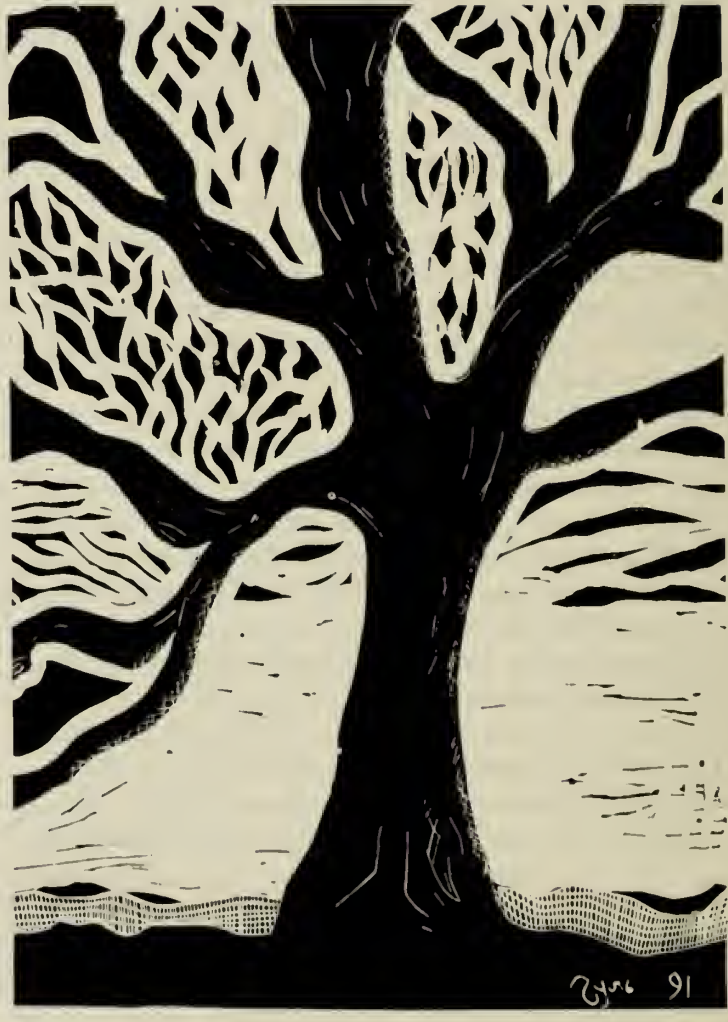
Although the bombing had stopped, we could hear the tanks in the main street and also the rapid fire of machineguns. The allies were here! Gradually everyone but myself went up the cellar stairs and into the house, assessing the damage and listening for the sounds outside. I was too scared and refused to come out of the safety of the cellar. My parents and the others let me be and walked to Main Street to see what was going on. Maybe after an hour they came back, urging me to come up, that it was really safe. I did not trust this calm; my nerves were shattered from the past few days. But I finally overwon my fear and we all went to Main Street, where the "Tommies" (soldiers) in tanks handed out cigarettes and chocolate. The population was jubilant. Everybody suddenly had Dutch red, white, and blue flags waving in the wind and people were singing "Orange in Top" (the color for the House of Orange). It was an overwhelming feeling to be outside and free. The hated Germans were either killed or taken prisoners of war; we were finally rid of them. Our family had survived and that evening we slept again in our own beds.

Although all these evens happened a long time ago, they are impossible to forget. War is a dreadful thing, and I hope that our children and grandchildren will never have to experience it.

The Blood of Nature

The tall pines grow inside the glen which stretches
along a cool creek
bouncing
down
the mountain
becoming the old,
meandering river that slips
past the drying farmlands and sleepy swamps,
through dammed reservoirs,
under rusting bridges
and into the coastal marshes, filtering the water
from the garbage of the miles of civilization
the river journeyed through,
and finally the river
plunges into the sea
to help build culminating clouds
that the winds carry
back uphill and release
to the pines,
in a gentle rain,
the waters of the neighboring creek.

Ron Speir, Jr.



Oak Tree with View—Joe Hul

The Ocean

Love is like the ocean.
Calm one minute, then raging and terrible
the next.
No warning given, uncaring of anyone or anything.
Capable of incredible fury,
but able to lap gently at your ankles.
As if it exists only for your pleasure
to enjoy and admire as if it has never been seen before.

But as peaceful as it may look on the surface
One can never tell what is underneath.
What horrors may be lurking there
Just out of sight. Waiting for the unlucky wader to
wander by. To strike, to wound,
to hurt as no other pain can hurt.

Sailors long ago, though they may have ruled the surface,
were terrified of what was below, what they couldn't see,
Couldn't control.
As I am with love. I have mastered the surface,
But what lies below I cannot even begin to control.
Just like the ocean.

Or is it I who am like the ocean, or my love?
We are both capable of the same sort of fury
Are we not?
Unable to understand ourselves except on the surface,
Much less the horrors just beneath.
Some say the ocean is the last frontier,
I say they are wrong.
It is love.

Something is like the ocean.
But how can I tell what
When I can't even understand my own mind?

MED

In Spite of Friendship

In spite of friendship
Instead of love
Because days gone by
Without a thought
To emotions or tender hearts
By means of enduring hatred
As well as a hardened heart.

In spite of friendship
Instead of forgiveness
Beneath the icy surface flows
With traces of anger, and of guilt
During moments of confusion
'Til time is no more in the memory of
men.

When time is no more
In the memory of men
During peace
With regard to friendship
With respect to love
In place of haunting hatred
Among the flowers of forgiveness
Contentment.

Bonnie Payne

Out

Imperceptibly squeezing out
from under his arm,
she slides smoothly out
of the cramped warmth,
and tiptoes out
onto the cold planked floor.

Silently slipping into set-out clothes
in the darkened place,
she hurriedly stops
to look back at him,
his arm encircling her pillow,
unaware of the loss.

Escaping out
into the new still morning,
she exhales,
turning her head to see who is out,
anxious to be going.

Striding briskly, her enthusiasm out-
strips her composure,
and she lets out
a delirious,
unplanned,
out-of-control
whoop!

Gayle Whitaker

Loved One

Sometimes I think I see you
looking through the clouds at me;
a secret shared by no one
about the family.

I tell you things I know
you'll want to hear about and then,
I tell you of my heart
and places that I've been.

Now granddaddy is with you
and building heavenly roads,
with bulldozers and graders
and instruments of gold.

Your grandmother, you would be proud,
grows sweeter every day,
and never does a day go by
that her thoughts don't pass your way.

Little brothers you would not know them
grown so tall and handsome too,
the sensitive and lean one
and the one that looks like you.

John, the oldest grandson now,
fifteen, tall and vain,
while a girlfriend every moment
fills his thoughts and brain.

And Thomas little cousin
grown so tall and thin,
fights a battle with leukemia
and knows some of where you've been.

Emily and Rebekah,
little cousins at their best,
with cheerleaders and Barbie dolls
little girls like all the rest.

Laura, the cousin you especially asked for,
arrived with joy last year,
A little sweetheart, pink and precious,
so special and so dear.

Your granny and your papa,
sing a special little song,
they remember you with fondness
and they know you sing along.

Your daddy now is growing
wiser every day,
his love for you these past four years
has grown in every way.

Our family has grown older
your memories have grown dear,
as we think of you in heaven
and miss you so down here.

Love, Mom

Tina Miles

Laying Waste to an American Generation

Russell Jones

It was an afternoon meant for children. The sun was shining down through broken clouds that were being pushed along by some comforting breeze that coaxed an occasional brown leaf from one of the trees surroundeding a small, grassy field meant for a boy, his dog and a frisbee. Yet there were no children, and from the distant look on the face of the lone, elderly man, there never had been, and probably never would be.

He sat in his cold steel wheelchair, alone in the shade of an old pine tree that grew nearest the asphalt parking lot bordering the expansive field. I had watched him struggle to arrive in his spot, fighting with the wheelchair in small patches of dirt with tree roots that protruded from the earth just far enough to make getting over them a monumental chore, requiring total effort from his aging muscles. Upon finally arriving under his tree, he wheeled over to what must have been a familiar spot as he jostled his wheelchair an inch or two in several directions until he seemed happy with the way he was facing. And so he sat— not reading, not writing, not eating or drinking, but looking. I feel sure he was not looking at the field or the clouds, but rather at his memories. He seemed almost lost in them, as America is lost in what to do with him.

It's shameful that America finds it convenient to shut away a generation after an arbitrary age deadline strikes. Retirement is forced on many seniors at 65, and some companies encourage early retirement with bonuses and parties. The same quick pace of the world that enforces the withdrawal of the elderly from working society also dictates that the younger generation input overwhelming amounts of time and energy to keep pace, and a problem develops. The solution for many Americans tends to be a Retirement Home. (While some may call it a rest home, or nursing home, or whatever, I will borrow from Shakespeare that "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.") This sad scenario represents a missed opportunity for many Americans, not just the old, but also the young.

For instance, I grew up knowing my grandfather to be a respectable man whom I looked forward to seeing, not as a broken man surrounded by other elderly people, some of whom were much worse off than he. This surely would have diminished my enthusiasm to see him and would have forever erased any opportunity for him to pass on to me his greatest gift — the gift of teaching.

Vernon Mixter was his name, and although he has long since passed away, his influence continues to guide me through life. He had about him certain qualities that defined for me terms such as determination, commitment, respect and endurance. These and many other lessons I learned from him, along with the way he unconsciously taught them to me, will stick with me forever.

For as long as I can remember, my grandfather had a wooden leg below his left knee. I think he lost his leg in an accident, although I can't say for sure because the subject hardly ever came up. To me, it was just a natural part of my grandfather. He never complained about it, or even mentioned it, really. He endured it with dignity. It was a good lesson.

I remember he was a great flying enthusiast. So dedicated was he that he built a Piper Cub airplane in his backyard. I never got to see him fly it, but I've seen pictures of him standing tall next to it. His emotions emanate from the picture and give away his feeling of pride and joy for his plane. Sadly, the reason I never got to see him fly in his plane, or fly with him, is the F.A.A. stripped him of his pilot's license when he lost his leg. He still took me out to fly his plane, though. In his determination not to abandon his love of flying, he turned to building remote controlled model airplanes, and he would take me to the park to help fly them. Carefully he would explain to me what ailerons were, and what the function for the rudder was; then with a quick upward thrust we would launch the plane into flight. He was determined to pursue his dreams, and he shared them with me. It was a good lesson.

Our camping trips at *Four Lakes Campground* also provided insightful memories about my grandfather. After the required campground meal of well done hamburgers and scorched hot dogs with a side of baked beans, Mom would break out the guitar and the women would start singing those corny folk songs I was surely too cool to sing. There was one song, however, that I could put up with, and even looked forward to hearing. *The Green, Green Grass of Home* was the name of the song, and part of it requires someone to talk to the music, not sing. This is where my grandfather came in. Somberly he would start into it. "The old town looks the same, as I step down from the train..." It wasn't the words so much that held the meaning for me, but the atmosphere surrounding the moment. All would be quiet with the exception of the crackling of the campfire and the rhythmic strumming of the guitar as the voice of my grandfather carried everyone into himself. He had everyone's attention without asking for it; he had everyone's respect without demanding it. It was a good lesson.

Looking back, it seems that my grandfather lived a full life, for although he was taken from me by a heart attack when I was very young, he had the opportunity to tell me of many experiences and share with me first hand many of the lessons he learned along the way. This is the way it should be, but tragically, today's society all too often relinquishes its elderly to the condescending hands of strangers, feeling its commitment filled with an occasional visit or telephone call. I can't help but wonder if this is the case for the elderly man who was sitting under the pine tree.

When I last saw him, he was asleep in his wheelchair, holding his head in his left hand as he slumped down. A nurse dressed in clinical white from her hat to her shoes approached the man, politely shook him awake, and started to wheel him back inside the home. Where was this old man's grandson? What good is coming from shutting this man back inside a sterile room where the four walls close in on him? There are lessons to be learned, experiences to be shared, all too valuable to be missed. On this beautiful afternoon, where were this man's children?

It's Only Quiet If You're Not Listening

The feel of fresh washed

sand

Smells of wet sea weed

Shore line and endless

sea

Musical air

Cotton candy hair

Star fish, seagulls and

sand dollars

Sticky skin

Red pain and lotion

lava sand

Laughter and joy

A thankful breeze

Moon slivers

Waves of thunder

Echo in ice

Sounds of still

Deb Domako

A Contradiction

Life begins not at birth
With shut eyes
And innocent cries.
Nor does life with puberty spring.
It starts to rise,
Then briefly dies.
And life doesn't come with
the adulthood moon,
With responsibility's hold
'Round freedom's god.

No, I don't think life starts then
When youth is sold
And love is cold

For me—

Life
Starts

Now.

JHP

Liquification

I find
That within the reach of my waves
I stand on chance of ever liquifying
even the slightest tinge of time
that drifts wondrously between now and when,
but if I tidal wide, fierce and just high enough,
I might find some trace of passion shoreline
that I arc or create or even destroy
with each new virtue instilled
by the vertical fluid integrity
that, by the Grace of God,
will continue to flow on,
spilling out before us,
until I find time to rest
and slowly but steadily roll and tumble in
to wash the old castles away
and to bring you a larger
and much brighter seashell than before.

Tim Gill

The Proper Utility

Is it indeed
The fool who ventures
between wakefulness and the big sleep?
is he lost?
trapped?
searching in vain?
right on?
—Whatever—
call me a fool,
for the truth lay here,
with me
on my pillow . . .
Oh, whisper them to me.
Tell me quiet fire-side stories
while we sleep
together
in quaint Father led family unities.

Tim Gill

Joe Christmas: Hero of *Light in August* And Beyond....

Christy Cadle

People have always searched for heroes to celebrate and heroic actions to applaud; they need good examples to hold up to society which prove the success of the human race. This need perhaps is the reason critics have attacked William Faulkner's *Light in August*, a novel seemingly bereft of hope and human triumph. But through the violence and darkness, a hero emerges, a mysterious character who attacks and murders.

Light in August centers around Joe Christmas, a character who kills his adopted father and his mistress, attacks his friends, and loves no one. His problem seems to develop from his unknown heritage, which rumor identifies as a mixture of black and white blood. He appears at first to be an aloof, almost vicious man; a man who draws the hatred of all he meets, including readers. But Christmas' character goes much deeper. Despite appearances, he does not portray the evil in the novel, nor does Faulkner intend him to do so. In fact, Faulkner's intention is the opposite; Joe Christmas is the hero.

On the surface, Christmas does seem more villainous than heroic. A closer study, however, reveals that Faulkner's hero is not so different from classical heroes of the past. Classical mythology tells us that these heroes are often born under mysterious circumstances, then spirited away to be raised by foster parents, often after the father or maternal grandfather has attempted to murder the child-hero (Noel 69). Such are the circumstances of Christmas' early life, who, we find out near the end of the novel, was born to a young white girl and a father of unknown (but presumed Negro) heritage. After killing Christmas' father, Hines, his maternal grandfather, tries to kill the baby Christmas, but later takes him to an orphanage where he is adopted by the McEacherns. From the beginning, Faulkner structures Christmas' life according to the model of the classical hero, thus illustrating the character's heroic origin.

Indeed, Christmas' entire life appears much like the life of a classical hero. John Longley compares Christmas' life to that of Oedipus. Both are burdened with a "curse," the curse handed to them by their parents, and it is because of their curses that both men "in the willing of [their] own actions against the pressure of [their destinies]" bring their downfalls (165). Just as Oedipus seeks the truth about his parents, Joe seeks to find his own "truth" in himself, to find his peace, and these searches for "self-knowledge" lead to their destruction (165). Christmas states that he, like Oedipus, is unable to break "out of the ring of what [he has] already done and cannot ever undo" (374). Both men make decisions that determine their destinies and bring their destruction. Again, the likenesses between the classical hero (Oedipus) and Christmas are strong, further revealing Christmas' heroic potential.

Not only does Christmas resemble the classical hero, but he possesses the qualities of a modern hero as well. Longley states that the modern hero should be:

> . . . typical of the age . . . and typify the major myths and problems of our century. In a cosmos where all is chaos...he will very likely be destroyed as a result of his failure to define himself correctly in relation to that cosmos. Lastly, he must embody the perpetual human constants which are the property of any age. (164)

Unfortunately, Christmas indeed represents our age. He portrays an outcast torn between self-discovery and the racial fears and prejudices of a society to which he does not belong. And it is his inability to reconcile himself to that society, to declare his race and "place," that destroys him. Even though he is an outcast, however, there is something about Christmas with which we can identify, his enduring search for peace. Before his capture, as Christmas sits in the quiet, half-light of dawn, he tells us, "[This] is all I ever wanted" (364). Christmas endures hatred and pity in search of a place where he really belongs; it is a search readers can understand. Thus, as a loner and outcast, destroyed by his rejection of society and his search for peace, Christmas also represents the modern hero.

But what of the murders Christmas commits? What about his cruelty? True, Christmas often appears the villain of the novel, but he only acts out violently when forced. Unlike Oedipus, he does not seek the truth about his past but about his present; he chooses to live for himself. He lives at one time with black people in their community, and later he tries to live in the white community as well. He refuses to tell society exactly what he is, most likely because he does not know himself. He cannot choose blackness or whiteness. And so it is when his foster father, McEachern, tries to force him to accept his lifestyle, or when his mistress, Joanna Burden, tries to bind him to her beliefs that Christmas strikes out. He reacts to those attempting to fit him into a society where he does not belong. Faulkner said that Christmas chose to "live outside the human race. And he tried to do that but nobody would let him, the human race itself wouldn't let him" (quoted in Minter 95). Thus, when society "refuses to let" Christmas live in his own world and make his own choices, he attacks it. These actions do not counter his heroic qualities. They reinforce them. John Longley explains:

> Christmas' dilemma is the truly tragic one. He is caught not between clear cut right and wrong, but between right and right. Rejected, feared, hated, he has sought and been proud of that rejection and fear; but pushed too far he has gone too far, and unable to reconcile conflicting responsibility, he has committed brutal murder. (169)

Therefore, Christmas' acts of violence result from his "modern hero" dilemma, and instead of illustrating his corruption and criminality, they support his claim to hero.

Because Christmas fulfills much of the classical and modern criteria for "hero," we must accept that Faulkner intentionally structured the novel to portray Christmas as a hero of the novel. But

Faulkner gives other indications that Christmas, despite his initial appearances of villainy, is the hero of the novel as a whole. He reveals his intentions in two ways, first through his depictions of Christmas, and secondly by anticipating their effect on the reader.

Faulkner creates a character who draws our sympathy and defies quick judgement. Instead of depicting only a violent and cruel man, Faulkner shows where Christmas' violent potential originates. For instance, because we see Christmas' life with McEachern, we understand that Christmas views religion as a system of control and self-denial. This understanding is important, because it is Joanna Burden's desire to make Christmas pray that leads him to kill her. Christmas himself says,"She would have been all right if she hadn't started praying over me" (117). Because we know about his background with McEachern, we understand that "praying" represented the ultimate threat for Christmas. We understand that the murder is not a calculated act of cruelty but a violent self-defense mechanism.

The sympathy we feel for Christmas continues throughout the novel because Faulkner shows us the forces which Christmas must endure. All of the characters that pursue and antagonize Christmas are difficult for readers to like or understand. Whether it is Hines, Grimm, or the greedy Lucas Burch, we do not wish Christmas to fall to their mercy. Because most of the characters possess their own wickedness, from the sheriff's brutal prejudice to McEachern's iron discipline, Christmas' cruel veneer fades slightly in comparison. Faulkner readily shows the different cruelties of the other characters, making us more understanding of how Christmas has developed into the confused loner that he is; he has been subjected to too much to emerge unscathed.

Faulkner best manipulates our sympathy in Christmas' death scene, and thus gives one of the best clues as to his intentions concerning Christmas. Here we see another example of Christmas' persecution and the response it evokes. After seeing Grimm fill Christmas' body with bullets and then castrate him, one of the other pursuers turns and vomits, explicitly showing the reader the repulsiveness of Grimm's actions. But lest we still be uncertain about the meaning of the scene, we are told that Christmas' image:

> ... seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful valleys, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not particularly threatful, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant. (513)

Here we have witnessed the death of a hero, a hero who "triumphs" only in death, and so it is his death that remains unforgettable.

Faulkner's biggest clue to Christmas' hero status is perhaps one of the least understood and most overlooked. Critics have often argued over the significant parallels between Joe Christmas and Jesus Christ. For instance, both men share the same initials, both appeared on Christmas, both died at the same age (thirty-three), and both were persecuted and then killed by their persecutors. Other parallels exist as well. But why? Why would Faulkner create such a violent character in Jesus Christ's likeness? Perhaps Faulkner intentionally modeled Christmas after Christ because of the potential of each to "save" mankind. Put simply, Christmas is Faulkner's sacrifice to a world he wants to save. By allowing Christmas to be crucified, Faulkner hoped to show the tragedy of Christmas' life, to remind the world what hatred causes and forgiveness saves. Faulkner sent his hero, Christmas, with a vengeance and a mission.

Faulkner intended Christmas to be his "hero" and "savior." However, Christmas' violence often interferes with the reader's ability to grasp Faulkner's meaning. For example, Alfred Kazin states that "Faulkner's world is grim" and "the opening of *Light in August* is so beautiful that nothing after quite comes up to it"(161). Lynn Gartrell Lewis agrees that because, "complete victory is unattainable . . . some critics . . . assert that Faulkner is commenting on the negative qualities in human nature, or, at best, on the inablility of the individual...to cope with the circumstances that confront him" (161). But we must not let the "grim" appearance over-influence our understanding. Readers of Faulkner know that he felt all works should be uplifting, including his own. The uplift in this novel comes not from a model hero but from the hero's gift. By illustrating the results of prejudice, hatred, and misguided righteousness—indeed, by embodying these results in one man—Faulkner gives us a model of what is wrong. The main character, Joe Christmas, is the hero because he is the vessel of Faulkner's lesson.

Because of the violence and hatred, readers may become entangled in the "rotted, pinched" look of the novel and find if difficult to see Faulkner's message of hope (Kazin 161). By looking deeper, though, we can see to the heart of the novel and its hero. And just in case the structural and effectual clues are not enough, Faulkner allows his hero to ask outright the question that is whispered throughout the novel. Christmas asks, "Just when do men that have different blood in them stop hating each other?" (274), making him not only the hero of Faulkner's novel, but (hopefully) the world beyond the novel as well.

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Cover photograph: *Stairway,* Jacquelynn Nessmith

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Tide to Nature
Joan Lehon

The moving sun-shapes on the spray,
The sparkles where the brook was flowing,
Pink faces, plightings, moon-lit May,
These were the things we wished would stay;
But they were going.

Going and Staying
Thomas Hardy

Traces of Morning: An engram of a dawning
NJ

Bittersweet memories traced in a tear
from my eye,
the beauty in the sound and the rhythm
of your innermost sigh,
lips upon lips, ear to ear, palm against
palm, touching, touching, ever so near.
Fingers trace lightly across your navel
in the morning and I told you it was my
dream,
I held you and watched you and pinched
myself to be certain it was real,
Oh, the feel.
The soft and tender skin, fingertips
dipping in the valley and rising again …
over and over and over.
My dream came true lying there with and
holding you.
Touching, touching, ever so near. Palm
against palm, ear to ear, lips upon
lips, navel to navel.
The beauty in the sound and the rhythm
of your innermost sigh,
Bittersweet memories traced in a tear
from my eye.

Negative Flower
Daria Lucree

Passages of Life
Allison B. Owen

Faceless Shadow

Joe Goldstein

I know that I don't know you.
I know that you don't know me.
Still in my mind I have a fantasy.

I would like to be with you
down by the river on a full moon night,
I would like to see your face
bathed in lunar light.

And all that you would see of me
would be a faceless shadow
watching silently.

Of course, I'd vanish into the air.
You'd never know that I was there.
It's not that you would really care—

No, not that you'd really even care.

Untitled (for jill)
P.S. Byrd

—Look—
into the setting sun, autumn.
I see you there
in golden rays I see reflected
—Your hair—

—Frosted morning—
snow covered rose on Gaea's hips
snow white flesh beframe
—Your lips—

—Rain drenched day—
not long one sighs
for so I'll see the clear blue in
—Your eyes—

—Midsummer's heat—
I'll persevere
sun glistening moisture drops
shimmering
drawing
—You near—

—A weathered hymn—

I sing of thee.

Little Red Riding Hood
Lisa Berry

The Bed

Deborah S. Brown

They were married shortly after the War. Times were good. The soldiers were coming back home and life would resume. President Eisenhower promised happy times were here again. New home construction was at an all time high. My parents were among the first to build their dream home too. There were peaceful, slow summer days listening to the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra on the radio, as new wives ironed their husbands' white cotton shirts. Electric oscillating fans hummed along blowing warm bursts of air across the rooms. A nice tall glass of iced tea was never too far away on those steamy hot Southern afternoons.

Before long, their first child came. She was so beautiful. Her skin was the creamiest white and her big brown eyes sparkled with personality. She had the daintiest fingers and toes. Someday she would surely become a prima ballerina or a concert pianist. Her mother often looked down at her curly-topped perfection and said, "She's just like me." What more could one ask for? "A girl for me, a boy for you. Oh, how happy we will be." The new song on the radio said it all.

The baby girl's father was strikingly handsome, the eldest son of an old-line Southern family. He was the musical, artistic one. He was a child prodigy. He was difficult. They sent him near and far to develop his gift. To say he was overindulged would not be inaccurate. Everything came easily to this charming boy wonder.

"Now," he said was the right time for a son. They made ready for the boy child that would make life complete. It never occurred to him that he might not get what he expected. She was so naive that she believed his every word and command. A new wing was added to the house for the darling child that would carry on the very respected family name.

It was many years before I asked any questions. I remember the dark olive green wallpaper with the cowboys on it, as if it were yesterday. The dark brown crib and dresser cast forbidding shadows on the wall. I remember on many occasions waking in "his" room, calling for Emma, my nanny. I loved her dearly and knew she would save me from the dark. She was a large woman. Her big, strong, black arms would lift me to her huge bosom and rock me until all my fears went away. She smelled of the sweetest sunshine. Her bleached white uniform was always ironed crisp and clean. Her gold-edged teeth twinkled at me when she smiled.

There were times when Emma wasn't there to lift me from my crib. The floor made deep groaning sounds. Sometimes I heard my sister laughing in the distance. I tried many times to escape this prison only to find wooden boards placed along the top of the crib to keep me in. I would lie in hot puddles of tears burning my cheeks as I gave in to exhausted sleep. My throat was parched from crying so long.

Time passed, and as I grew the crib became too small. One special day I heard loud piercing noises coming from my dreaded room. I walked to the door and peeked in, as only an inquisitive three-year-old can do. The room looked as if the good fairy had come and transformed it. The walls seemed to almost disappear in the lightest shade of pink. The pink and white gingham curtains almost floated from the windows. The most beautiful gold and white princess bed, just like my sister's, sat in the place of the old crib. On top of the matching white dresser there was a beautiful pink lamp. It was a doll dressed in ruffles, holding a parasol that concealed the bulb. The bedspread had tiny poodle dogs dancing across with bows on their ears. A round fluffy rug was placed in the center of the room waiting for my little toes to sink into it.

The first night was filled with many warnings: "Do not get out of your bed, do not fall out of your bed, and do not jump on your bed." I never wanted to leave this beautiful haven. This was a dream come true. I feared the bed might not be there in the morning. I held my arms above my head on the plump new pillow. I tried not to fall asleep. The open windows allowed the smell of newly cut grass and pink paint to envelop me. The crickets and frogs sang songs of love to me. Stars twinkled their reflection in my dresser mirror. They looked like fireflies dancing in the night. Warm, gentle, peaceful sleep cuddled me. I was a girl, too. ■

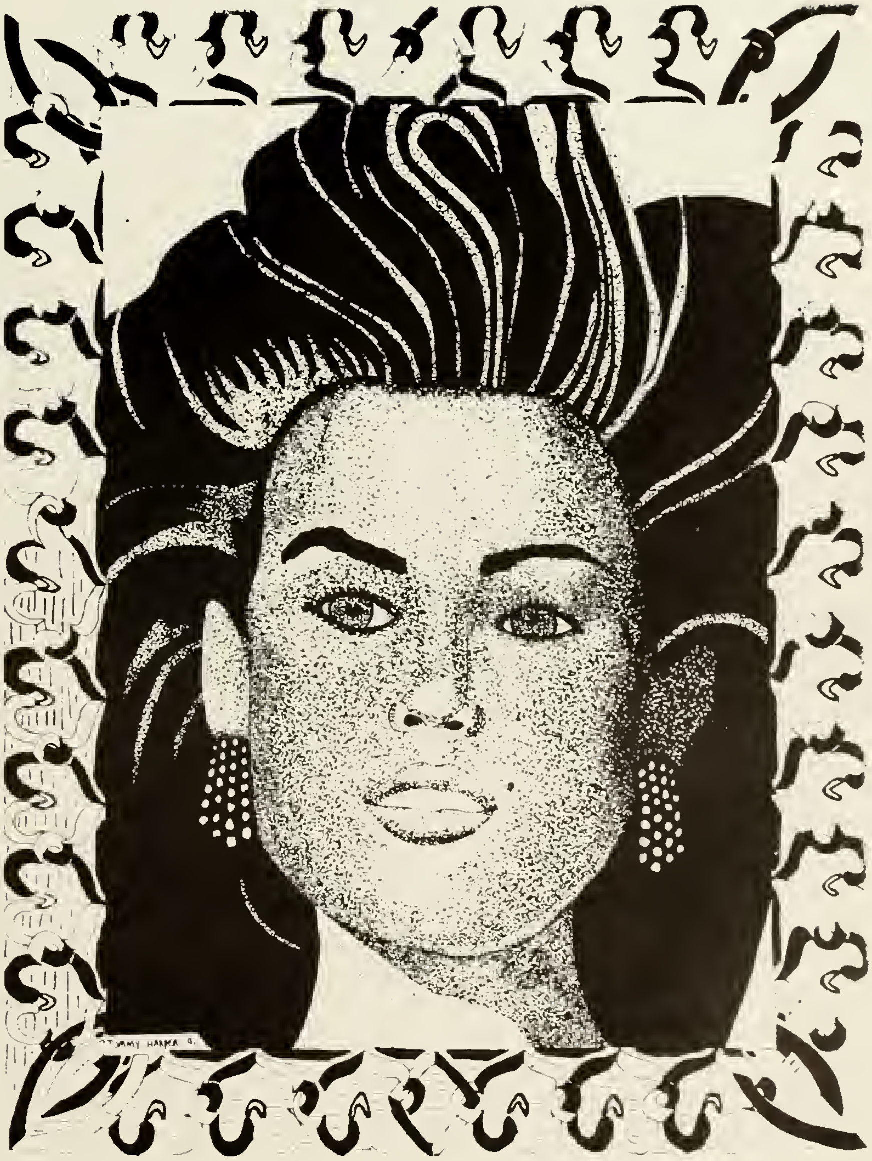
Workout

Gayle Whitaker

When she entered the room with its merciless mirrors and
machines of torture and packed with the women, some gabby,
some silent, some sitting alone with a pensive
expression, and other still prepping their
outfits for viewing, and each of them
garbed in the *de rigueur* colors of
black mixed with neon, and white Nike
Airs, and all of their legs so
toned and eye-popping, and waists waspish-sized,
with no hips much to speak of, and arms that would
never be jiggly-jelly, their hair that smoothed back
into blond ponytails with little-girl hair bows,
and engine-red nails that could leave a bad scratch,
she knew that this bevy   of athletic beauties
was in this for keeps,   a life-long commitment
to sit-ups and leg-lifts   and push-ups, and
crunches, with sweat   dripping off like the
drops from an eave,   and endlessly counting
their fats and their   carbs, while taking
a pulse that was   never too high.
So, quietly   backing her way
out the door   before any noticed
her uneasiness,   she ended her
misery   before it began.

Kind of a Modern Sonnet
J. Michael Brown

such beauty in a girl I've never seen
hair cascades down her back like precious gold
eyes bluer than the skies have ever been
surely formed from some Greek goddess' mold
lips more red than any ruby on land
her body is smooth and brown from the sun
I feel this need to take hold of her hand
so I ask her where such beauty comes from;
she smiles and says "my teeth are all fake
my hair is from a gallon of Clorox
my eyes are brown but I got new contacts
I got this tan by lying in a bed
you look right nice yourself if I may say
what are you doing on next Saturday?"



Haughty Woman
Tommy Harper

Summer on the Farm

Gerry Provence

One of my earliest memories is of playing with my brother Jan on the front porch amid family and neighbors. Both barefoot and wearing only pull-on pants in the summer heat, Jan was three years old and I was five. When Daddy called me over, I stood expectantly as he tilted his head back, peered down through his glasses and touching me lightly on the chest said: "What is this right here?" I ran to find my discarded shirt, which had been innocently tossed aside.

One Sunday morning, Jan and I were in the front room where Daddy and others were visiting. Mama and our older sisters were preparing dinner. As Daddy pulled Jan between his knees into the circle of his arms, I attempted to back in alongside Jan. Quietly, gruffly, Daddy said: "You go on out of here." I raced to the kitchen.

My parents were different in temperament but consistent in their differences. Mama did not seem to mind noise and playfulness from her children as, dressed in a homemade cloth bonnet, sensible shoes, beige cotton stockings and an apron over her long-sleeved cotton print dress, she worked. Mama gardened, raised eight children, sewed and patched our clothing, canned vegetables, crocheted, quilted and tatted. Patient and even-tempered, she did not abide sass or profanity. Once my sister, Modrea, and I were arguing, when to add strength to my case I shouted, "Blame it all, I know it's so!" With a swift swat to my backside Mama taught me not to swear.

Daddy, however, was usually cross and stern so we mostly stayed out of his way. I remember him sitting forward, with his elbows resting on his knees, occasionally ejecting a stream of Bull of the Woods tobacco juice as shavings curled off the knife blade and fell between his feet. Daddy, a whittler, whittled on the arms of the front porch rockers, his thumbnails and sticks. On each thumbnail down the middle from top to bottom he fashioned a split. Over six feet tall, of portly build, he wore long-sleeved shirts, a small soft-brimmed straw hat and khaki pants tucked into high boots, which laced to just below his knees.

Mama's mother was my favorite person. She married Grandpa when she was fourteen and he twenty-eight, and they had ten children, one whom died in infancy and another, Florence, who died from burns after falling into the open fireplace. Grandma wore her hair in braids coiled into a bun on the back of her head. She was permanently stooped due, she said, from not standing up straight when she was young. She addressed me and all other children courteously, including a "ma'am" or "sir."

In the summer we worked in the barn loft, which smelled of the mules, Kate and Ida, stabled below, newly cured tobacco, corn and mice. Manure added an unoffensive pungent odor. High and flat, the ceiling sloped downward to the chutes for corn and hay. Just inside the back stairs were remnants of the previous year's peanut hay. On the opposite end, two four-foot doors opened outward just tall enough for a man to stand upright, framing sky, tree tops, birds perched on power lines and the far end of the neighbor's cornfield.

Tobacco stored in the loft between harvest and market had been kiln-dried in the tobacco barn, the doors then left open so that hopefully the brittle leaves had absorbed sufficient moisture to be pliable— "in order." When not "in order" and the barn was needed for the next cooking, everyone in the household got up extra early to form a conveyor belt to the sweet potato patch, spreading the tobacco on the dew-moistened vines where, after breakfast, it was gathered and placed in the loft. Getting the tobacco ready for market consisted of taking it off the sticks, where it had been attached with string in "hands" of three or four leaves and placing it in sheets made of burlap fertilizer bags.

Newspapers were spread on the loft floor before placing the tobacco in continuous stacks down each side leaving room for "string-horses" in the middle, where in two's, family members removed leaves from the sticks and the string from the leaves. Sorted by quality, the leaves were then stacked along the walls, stem ends outward. Empty sticks were tossed out the door to later be freed of string remnants and stored in the stickhouse.

The loft could be entered through the wide hay door by climbing up the gate or by the stairs through the stable. The hay door was a favorite with children, who with a running start sailed out, just clearing the stick pile. It was also great fun to climb higher through the hole in the ceiling and out into the roof of the side shelter to be spooked by dust and the far dark reaches under the eaves.

Once when I was ten, E.C., an older brother, Daddy and I were in the loft sheeting tobacco for market. We handed the tobacco to Daddy as he knelt in the middle of the sheet, where he placed a beginning fan of tobacco in the middle and then handful by handful formed a circle with the stems outward, his knees pressing the fragrant, colorful leaves into a compact unit.

Silently in the sweltering heat we walked back and forth handing the tobacco to Daddy as he moved around the circle, sweat dripping from his nose. Suddenly, each time I presented a handful of tobacco, something was wrong with it. Daddy grumbled, "Hold it this way, so I can get to it." "Can't you keep the hands all the same size?" "Why don't you watch what you are doing?" It was impossible to know what to do. No child in our household ever deliberately and with foreknowledge disobeyed Daddy. E.C., a grown man who had been in the War and fought in Germany, spoke up quietly, not unkindly, "Why don't you just leave her alone?"

The funnies in the newspapers under the tobacco stacks were an endless distraction. Also distracting was E.J., a neighbor's son, who stopped by the loft late one afternoon all dressed up. As he stood silhouetted in the doorway my older sisters were convulsed with giggles. After he had gone they said, "You could see Christmas. He didn't have on a sign of drawers."

Brother Ellie, number six to my seven, chased me away and ordered me around. One afternoon while working in the loft, I went to get a drink of water and was dawdling on the way back. Ellie tried to force me back on the job and had my head under his arm when Mama happened by telling him, "You leave your sister alone and get on back to work."

Breaking for dinner at noon, the girls washed up and set the table. The boys cared for the animals if they had been used or simply washed up. A standard summer menu was creamed corn, sliced tomatoes, peas and butterbeans with okra steamed on top and removed before serving, rice, biscuits, hoecakes of cornbread, iced tea and dessert of cake baked with fresh blackberries picked from the fence row or ice cream made in extra icetrays in the refrigerator. When Uncle Pat, one of Mama's brothers, ate with us, he would refuse the ice cream if fish was served. Because, he said, if he ate fish and ice cream at the same meal it would kill him.

We sat on homemade benches at the homemade table covered with a patterned oilcloth. A chair was placed at each end, one of which had a black and white cowhide bottom. Usually, enough was cooked midday so that the evening meal required only baking bread, fritters or sometimes a main course—such as sausage and tomato soup. Or, a special dessert of apple butter made by whipping a couple of egg whites with a fork until stiff, adding sugar and the spooned pulp of one or two fresh apples and eaten with biscuits or fritters.

When it was just family we each had our place. When others were present, only Daddy had his place. Places extended to chicken parts. One day the preacher came to dinner and as the chicken was passed, I helpfully said, "Nobody take the liver. That's Daddy's." Leftover food was placed in a safe to be served at supper. Dishes were washed in a pan with water heated on the stove or dipped from the watertank built into the stove and were not rinsed except once on a cold morning when Mama got up to cook breakfast and found the plates frozen together. My older sisters had done such a lick and promise drying job that hot water was needed to separate them.

Early on, water was drawn from a well in the back yard in which a catfish could sometimes be seen swimming when the sun was just right. Later, water was piped in to the kitchen and to the watershelf on the back porch. The kitchen along with the rest of the house had no central heat and was not insulated. There was only the outside wall between the kitchen and the elements. Mama once found a chicken snake hanging in the kitchen rafters.

When my children gather at my home with their children, frequently sharing tales of how it was when they were growing up, I sometimes fail to recognize my role in their stories. Many stories are shared which I do not remember happening—as they are told, if at all.

Yet, at other times when alone, I recognize Mama in the mirror and in those pastimes which I find most comfortable.

Recently, Jeanne, a cousin, mailed each of our family a copy of a genealogy chart showing the arrival of our ancestor, Thomas Heckel, from Holzkirk, Germany at Ebenezer, Georgia, on the Third Swabian Transport on November 23, 1752. In discussing this and our more recent heritage, I discovered that Daddy's father, too, was a whittler.

■

Purple Iris
Anne Marie Brasier

Ogeechee

Lloyd Newberry

Deep in the hills of the county of Green
A Princess is born, a sparkling stream.
Unpretentious and small, a rivulet so clean,
Providing promises of nourishment and habitats serene.
So beautiful she flows, loved by all it would seem,
Georgia's Princess of Rivers, the Ogeechee, pristine.

Downward she grows swelling on to the main,
Through Georgia's heartland and coastal plain.
From Crawfordville to Shoals to Louisville,
Down to Millen, Rocky Ford, and Richmond Hill.
Two hundred fifty miles of eddy and lee,
Through the marshes of Bryan and into the sea.

Through swamps primeval and forests sublime,
The ancient cypress and loblolly pine
Share turf with the hickory and the oak on high,
While in dark pools below, spider lilies lie
In beds of fragrance; it's honeysuckle time,
With fiery splashes by the trumpet vine.

For many a critter the river is home.
Two playful otters leave an alligator alone.
A palette of colors, the wood duck swims by
A shad, whose destiny to spawn and then die.
Redbreasts in the morning or raccoons at night
Provide a young boy's or an old man's delight.

Often in spate or parched to a trickle,
No impediment impinges her right to be fickle.
Spinning no turbines and carrying no freight,
The lady remains a pampered darling to date.
So beautiful she flows, loved by all it would seem,
Georgia's Princess of Rivers, the Ogeechee, pristine.

Gypsy Feet

Elaine Hall

Wandering feet that can not rest
    roving heart that beats the breast
Longing for a peace unknown
    searching always— no where home

Out of place and lost in time
    a lilting song that lacks a rhyme
Pain cries out and anger heeds
    tears are shed for thoughtless deeds

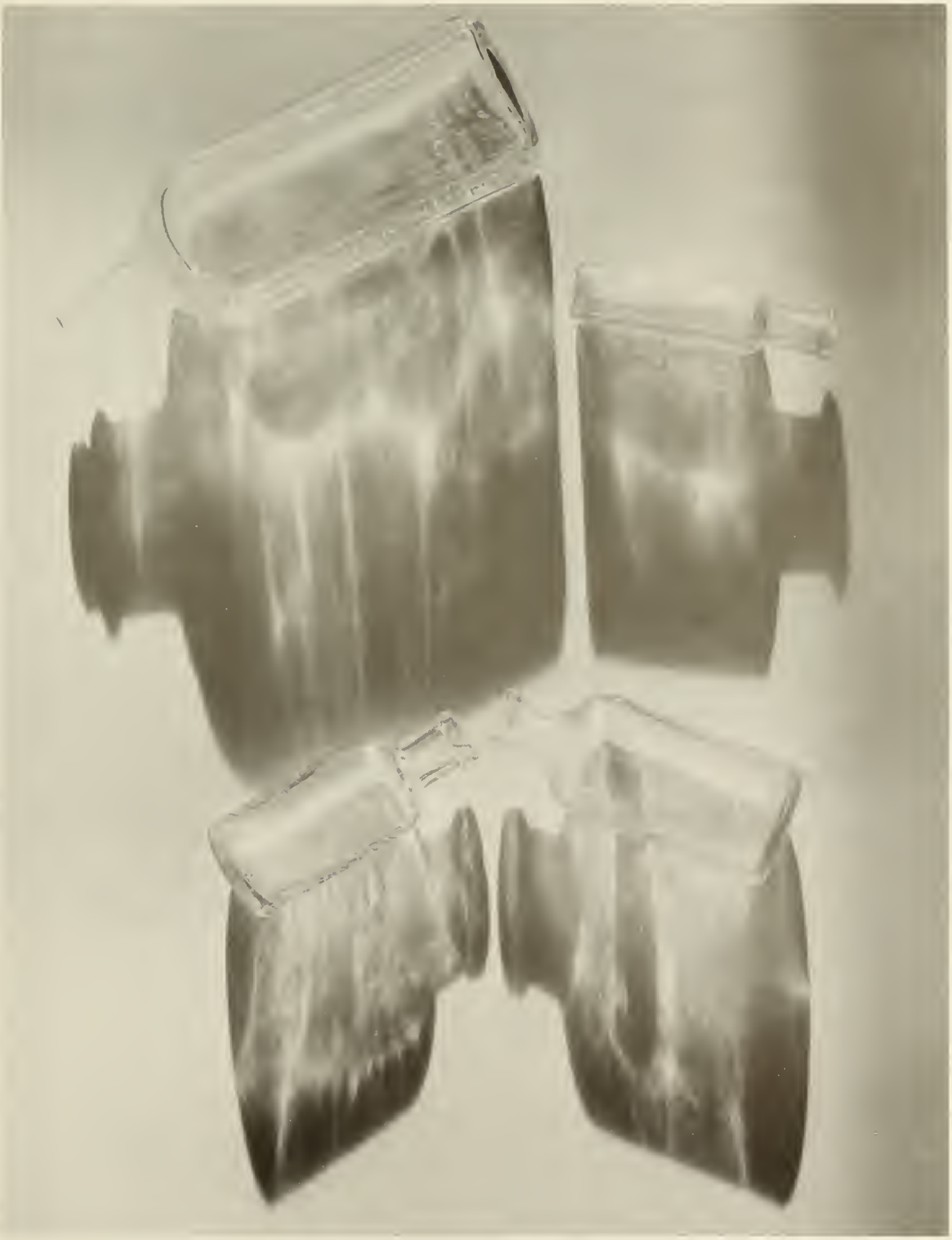
Confusion calls to the beast within,
    nature's child, free of sin
Ensnared in a self-made web of lies
    bound by honor, tied by pride

Love and family beckon close
    but wanderlust is felt the most
The loner's way is hard to go
    but gypsy feet forever roam.

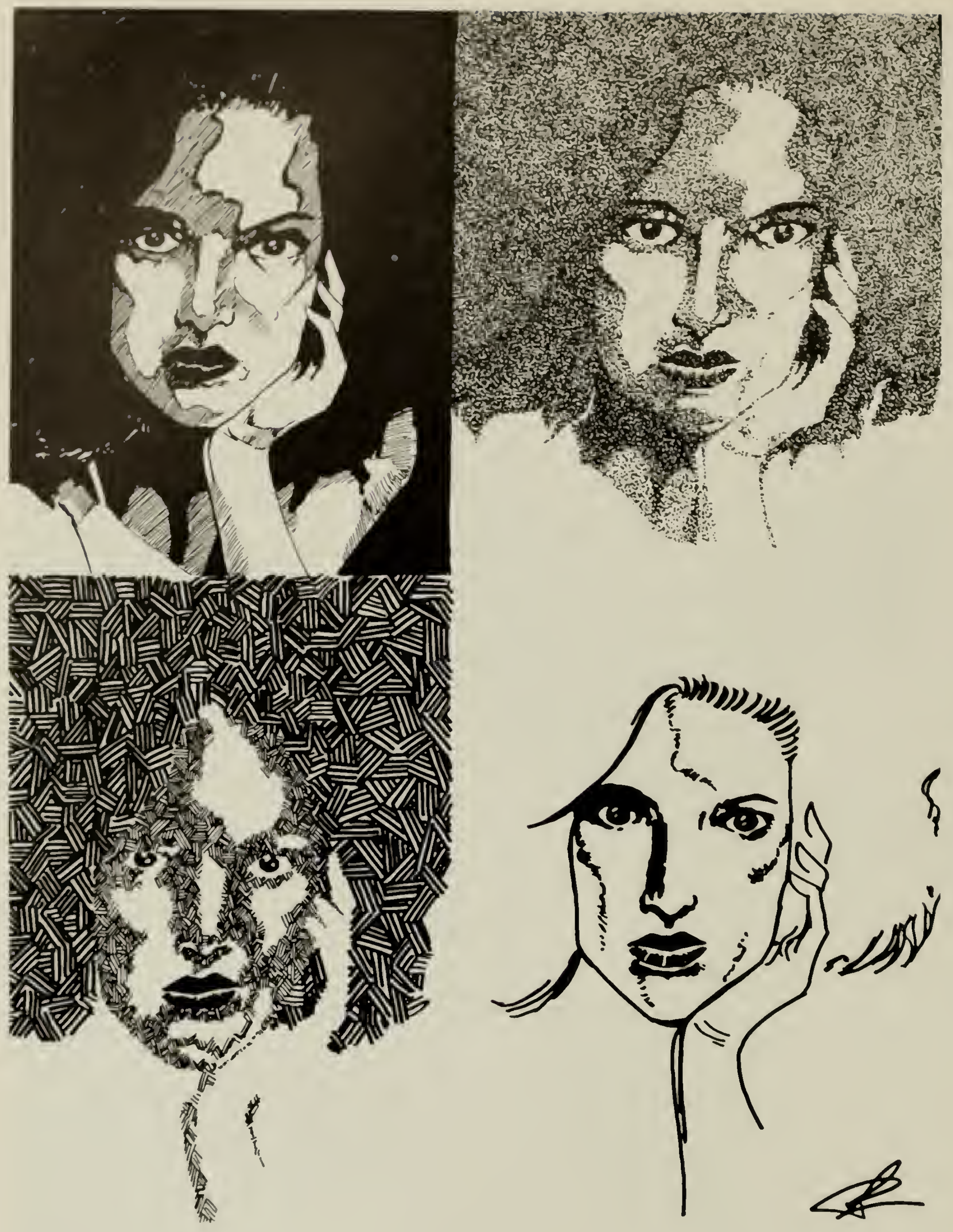
Prescriptions

Melba Nelson Moore

I stopped by the drug store as I was on the go,
To buy some medicine, I needed it so.
I bought earrings, lipstick, a can of hair spray,
A garden hose, a lawn chair, and floral clay,
A typewriter ribbon, and a dinner plate,
Plus a candy bar, and a rock and roll tape.
I got a broom and a mop, and a coffee pot,
Some bedroom slippers, and a folding cot.
I loaded my car as best I could,
I had to tie some of it on the hood.
As I made my way home I had a sick thought,
There was something I needed I had not bought.



Bottles
Jacquelynn Nessmith



Stares
Phillip Lightfoot

The Martini

John B. Holst

As Frank entered the kitchen from the garage he called, "Hi, Dear, I thought you were still out; what have you done with your car? It's not in the garage."

Without turning from the sink Ann said, "Aren't you a bit late—like two hours?"

"I had to work late, but what about your car?"

Hugging him, Ann said, "Hmmm, is that a new after shave?"

Breaking away, Frank said, "No, but one I haven't used for a long time. Your car?"

"I called your office about an hour ago—no answer. I left it at Marie's. We went to Walmart in her car. What's that on your shoulder? Hmmm, a long blonde hair. Not mine."

"Why on earth did you leave your car at Marie's?"

"I was in a hurry to get home to you, so she dropped me off here."

"You had to come right past Marie's to get here from Walmart. What's wrong with the car?"

"Nothing. I'll pick it up the next time I go out. Where were you when I called you?"

"I told you. I had to work late. I was out with a client. I'll take you to get your car in the morning."

"No, not tomorrow. I'm not planning to go out tomorrow. A client? Wearing Chanel Number Five?"

"O.K. I'll drive by in the morning to make sure it hasn't been hit or stolen."

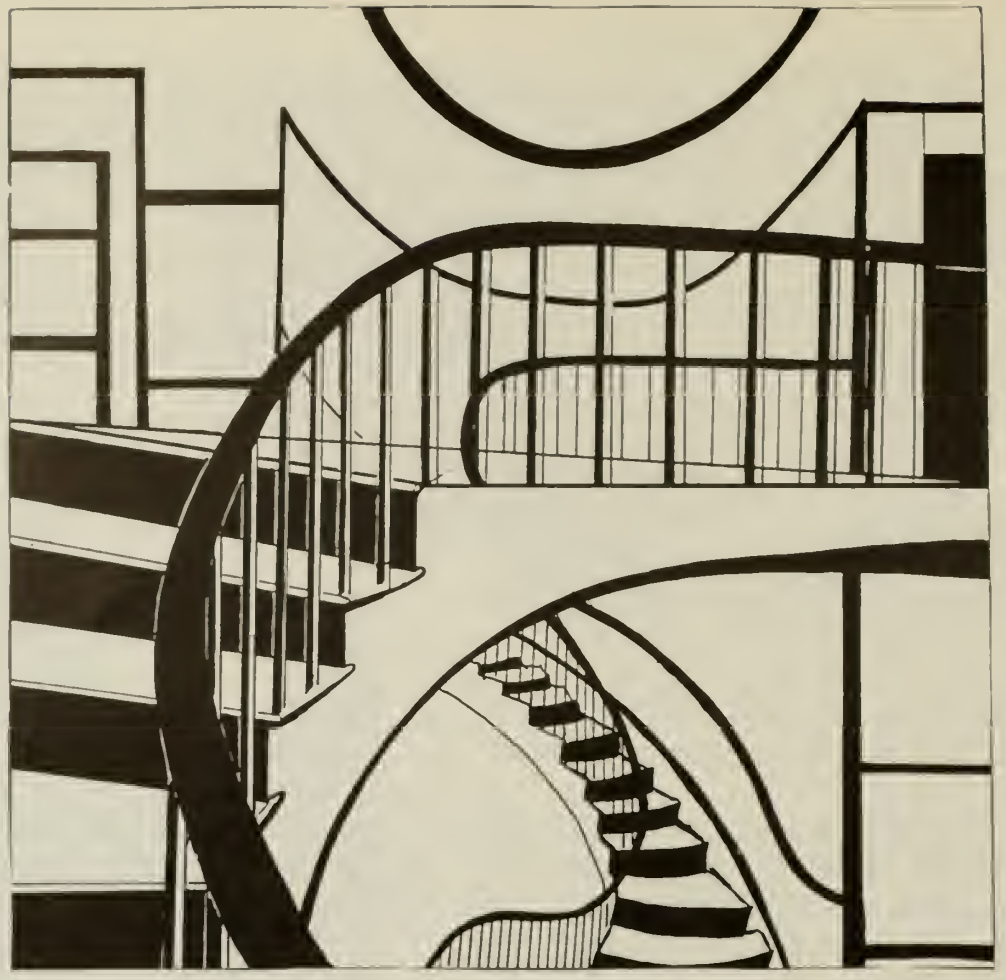
"No need. Marie said she'd put it in her garage."

"O.K. Want a drink before dinner?"

"Yes, thanks. The usual."

■

Turnings
Jane Rampton



Winner of the Lillian Spencer Award for the Best Poem in Calliope

Seize the Day

Katy Pace Byrd

The whole life is the tender touch, the swan
Dive, the mountain climb, the music note, the
Baby's cry, the dog's tongue, the sunbeam'd eye,
The throbbing dance that brings the gulping throat.
The half life is diminishment, the less
Of less, the crib bereft and a smaller
Box, the invalid bed and palsied will,
The open-doored cage where the bird still stays.
The shelf life is the self put up, the use-
By-when or toss it out, the unread book,
The unwrit poem, the hidden heart, the wasted
Womb, the savings bank that's never spent.
Clear choice, but fear stops risky life's embrace.
The tiger waits behind all three doors.

Algebra

Gerry Provence

Algebra, be still that I may speak.
As I follow with confidence down your seemingly logical path, your steps like quick-silver elude my thoughts.
What seems orderly and precise in class at morning is borne away on the wind at night.
On test day you are stranger still in judge's robes.

What will in time, I pray, be mine are but skittering teasers.
Each day I witness teacher corral your gamboling trick as he runs you through, slowly, revealing secrets by name and place.
With him you are docile, obedient, correct.
I am but your plaything as with poltergeist delight you make sport of me when out of teacher's sight.

In innocence I have believed that to snare even one barb would bring you into my net.
And, following plan, have marched you, constant and variable, back and forth, to and fro in parade over time and space.
And, you were to let go of frolic and introduce me to your relatives.
And, I to thrill to family secrets.
Algebra, mysterious spirit, hold still won't you? I'm not finished yet.

Sliding Board

Lisa Berry

The Vacation

Joseph Hul

Sam and I both arrived at about a quarter till, so we went and burned one out by the dumpster. At about six we flicked on the pumps and the lights. Some early birds came by and filled up, and Sam was topping some lady off when we saw it. The beautiful orange light beamed at us. It first touched the wrecker's boom, then the truck itself, and finally sparkled in every drop of rain that fell overnight.

"A mornin' like this makes you want to go camping."

"Yeah, it'd be nice to just take about a week off and just go."

"Right. Like George is just gonna go up to you and say, 'Go ahead Sam, take a week off. I'll be glad to pump gas for you all week.'"

We both laughed at the idea of George all dressed up in his suit, stepping out of his new 'vette and pumping gas.

"I don't care what George'd say, the sun hasn't been out for weeks and I just can't stand it. Anyway, if I'm gone he'll just make you pump the gas."

The sky had about half cleared by now, and it looked like we were finally going to have nice weather. Buoyed by the atmospheric conditions, we went at our work with enthusiasm. I changed about three or four tires, and Sam got the first road call.

At about 7:30 Sam came back with McDonald's, so we had some breakfast. The sky had completely cleared by now, and we could feel the first effects of the warming sun. We ate impatiently, not knowing when or if we would ever be able to enjoy the sun again. Sam mentioned the prospects of camping over and over.

"You're just makin' things worse, Sam. All this talk about where and who with. Now you're even making me think about takin' off."

"Man, I just can't stand workin' anymore. All I've been thinkin' about lately has been the Pine Barrens or the Water Gap. I used to go to the lake, then on to Raccoon Ridge in half a day."

"Yeah, Raccoon Ridge. Once you hike past that you're in the national park and there's nobody there. You don't even have to camp at the sites after the ridge."

"I remember a time I was up there I really felt like an Indian. I was walkin' along and lookin' out over the Jersey side, and I caught some lights way out in the distance. It's like God's country."

"Yeah, 'til the fog lifts and you catch a view of those smokestacks."

"When I'm up there I can even enjoy them."

On that note the phone rang. This one was going to be my road call, and it looked as though I was going to have to tow it in. Some friend of George just got his car fixed here and now it won't start. Smoothing ruffled feathers, that's my specialty.

The call took a pretty long time. The guy had a Benz, so I had to dolly the wheels and use a board and blanket on the bumper. When I finally got back, the sun was already thinking about hiding behind some clouds. I could see George in the distance, and he really seemed to be working Sam over. I was hoping that he didn't find his stash. As I pulled the car in, he started heading for me. I expected the worst, since he was at my door before I was even parked. I could see the thunderstorm starting to brew again.

"Don't even tell me we screwed up on Raymond's tune-up."

"It seems to be his starter; he's got good juice from the battery." This was a good sign, since we didn't touch his electricals.

"Well thank God for that. Just put the car in Bob's bay. He had the last job on it."

"All right." I was happy to let Bob deal with the car. The last thing that I wanted to do was deal with that guy again.

Sam wanted to take a couple of road calls, but George wasn't going to let him. He just told him to tell me to take them. The rain started to fall. Sometimes you thank God for road calls, and sometimes you curse him. I knew that Sam and I were both cursing him now.

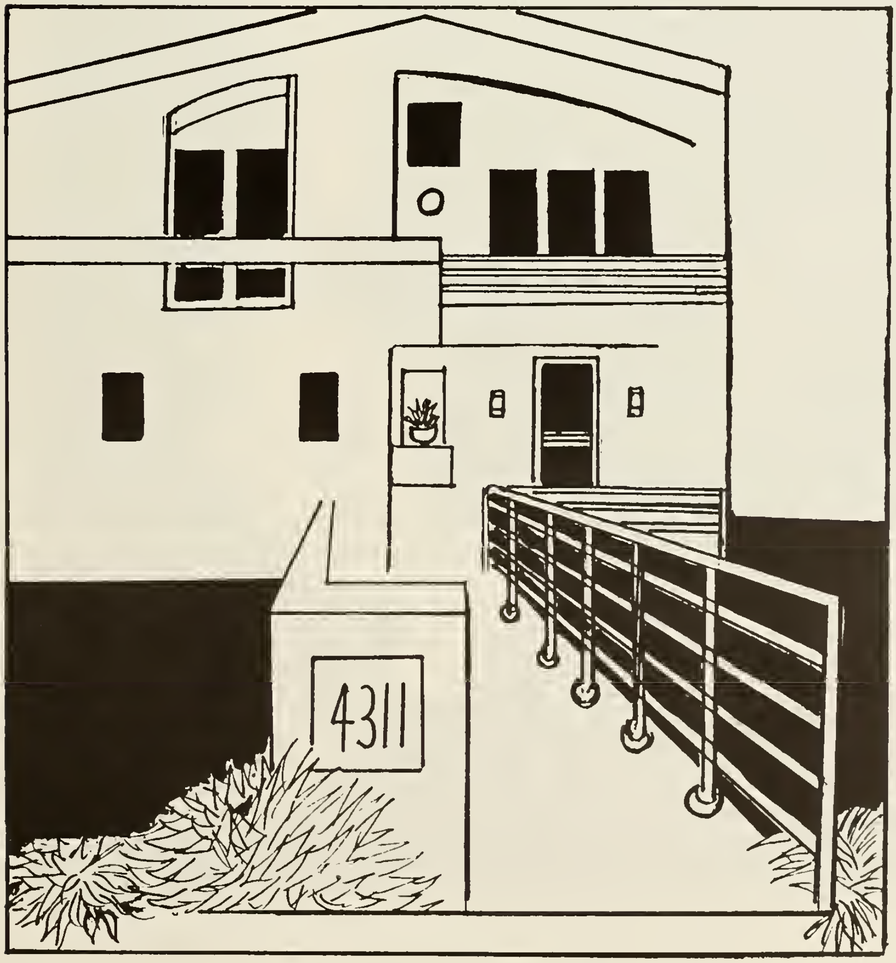
The rain was really coming down now. As I changed a woman's tire, the cold water was dripping off my nose. All I really wanted to do at that point was to just go home. Pulling into the station, the rain was coming down so hard that I could barely see the lights. I parked the truck, got the tire out, and rolled it to the tire machine. Luckily, yesterday was uniform day, and I could go into the back to change my clothes. As I was putting my shirt on, Bob came into the room.

"Well, Sam's gone," he said matter-of-factly.

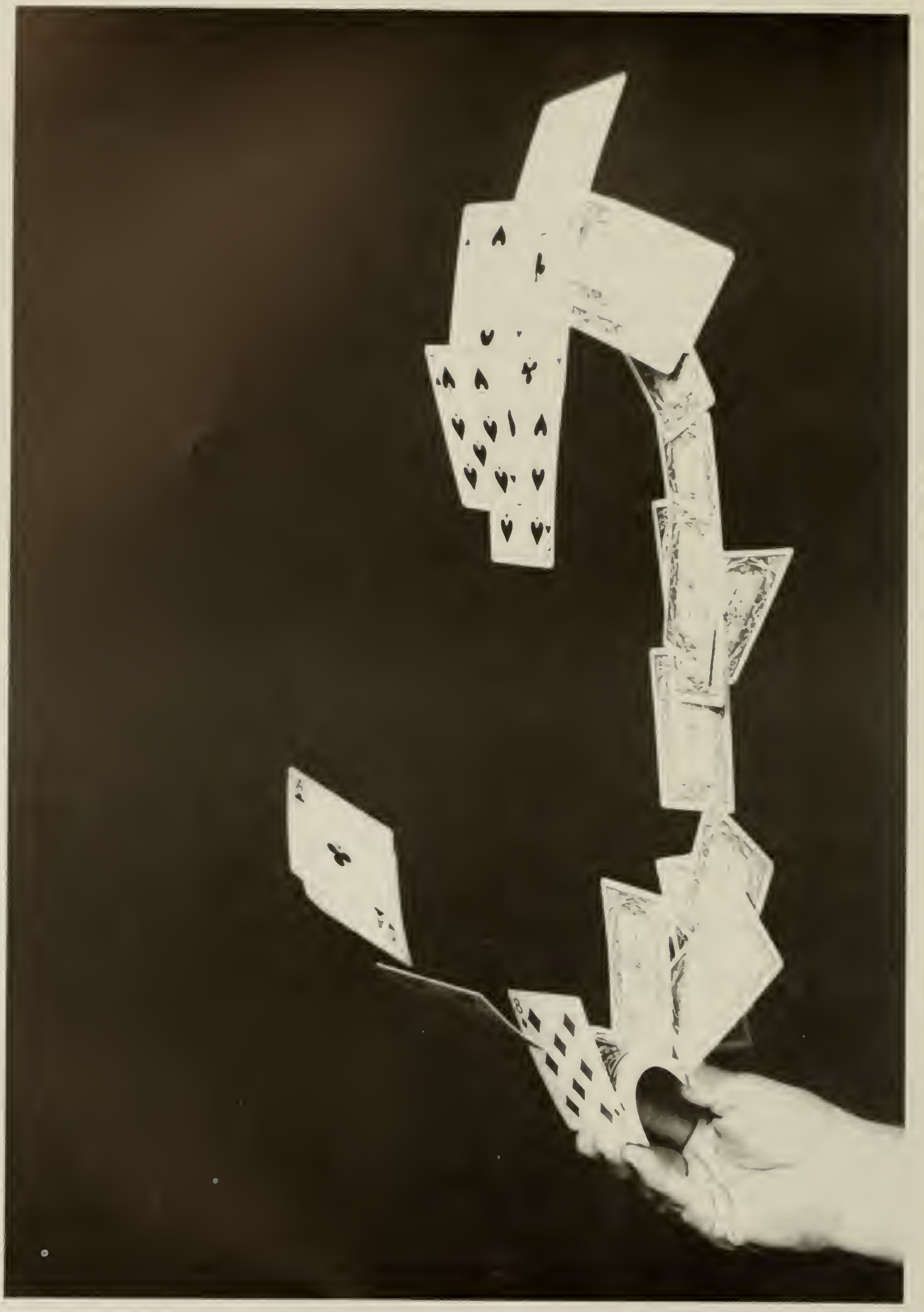
"Gone! What do you mean Sam's gone?"

"George just kind of went over the edge and fired him," he said in monotone.

I was speechless. I don't know whether it was out of envy or fear, but I had wished that George had fired me instead. I wondered about that for a minute, and then the bell rang, so I grabbed a jacket and walked toward the pumps. George was already out there in his nice suit, soaked and looking miserable. I thought of how lucky Sam really was. ■



Nobody's Home
Barbara Wilkes



Sleight of Hand
Steve Usher

The Deadline Be Damned
Michael Eugene Bowman

With three spins of the globe,
I saw bronze made from gold.
The brand of "A" was made a "C"
When time became a tyranny
Over thought a deadline rolled.

Each spin exacted toll;
Quality killed fivefold,
Was this decay or robbery?
The deadline be damned!

Jeweled thought may be your goal,
But on spins the mighty globe,
Which some behold with majesty.
Woe to the student found guilty
Of tardy thought made of gold.
The deadline be damned!

The Call of a Triton
Joan Lehon

God's Grey Earth
Adrian

Let me tell you about my vacation.
We went up in a ship to Moon station,
and the world was so pretty from there,
you could see everything.
The seas so dark and grey
against the yellow forests,
and the clouds, Oh! The clouds,
are such a pretty green.
Then later, the best sights of all
are long after nightfall;
when all you can see
is the sparkling blue from the craters.

A Night of Lights
Joan Lehon

Paris Traffic

John B. Holst

Traffic rules are becoming standardized in the civilized world,
So you might think you could drive easily and safely any place
Such as, Washington, New York, Montreal, Mexico City, Younameit.
                                        But when it comes to Paris,
                              The normally defensive Maginot Line Frenchman shifts
                    Gears to the offense in the well founded belief
That the best defense
                                           Is a good offense, and the custom,
                              Universally accepted by Parisian drivers, that
They have the right of way over those on their left and must give
                                                                                    Way
                                                          To those on their right,
                         Leading to the firm belief that it is possible
To-drive-through-the-entire-city-with-the -left-window-
                                                  blacked-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx-out
                                        Without having an accident, proves the maxim
                    That to
                              Avoid losing your right of way,
Never get caught looking at the drivers of the cars on your left.

❦

Tied Up
Ami Parkerson

Seasons of blankness as of snow,
The silent bleed of a world decaying,
The moan of multitudes in woe,
These were the things we wished would go;
 But they were staying.

Going and Staying
Thomas Hardy

Colors

Jason S. Richardson

A Green Man enjoys the same
blue sky as does an Orange Man.
A Green Man enjoys the same
blue ocean as does an Orange Man.
A Green Man enjoys the same
blue eyes as does an Orange Man.
But a Green Man and an Orange
Man will not enjoy one another.

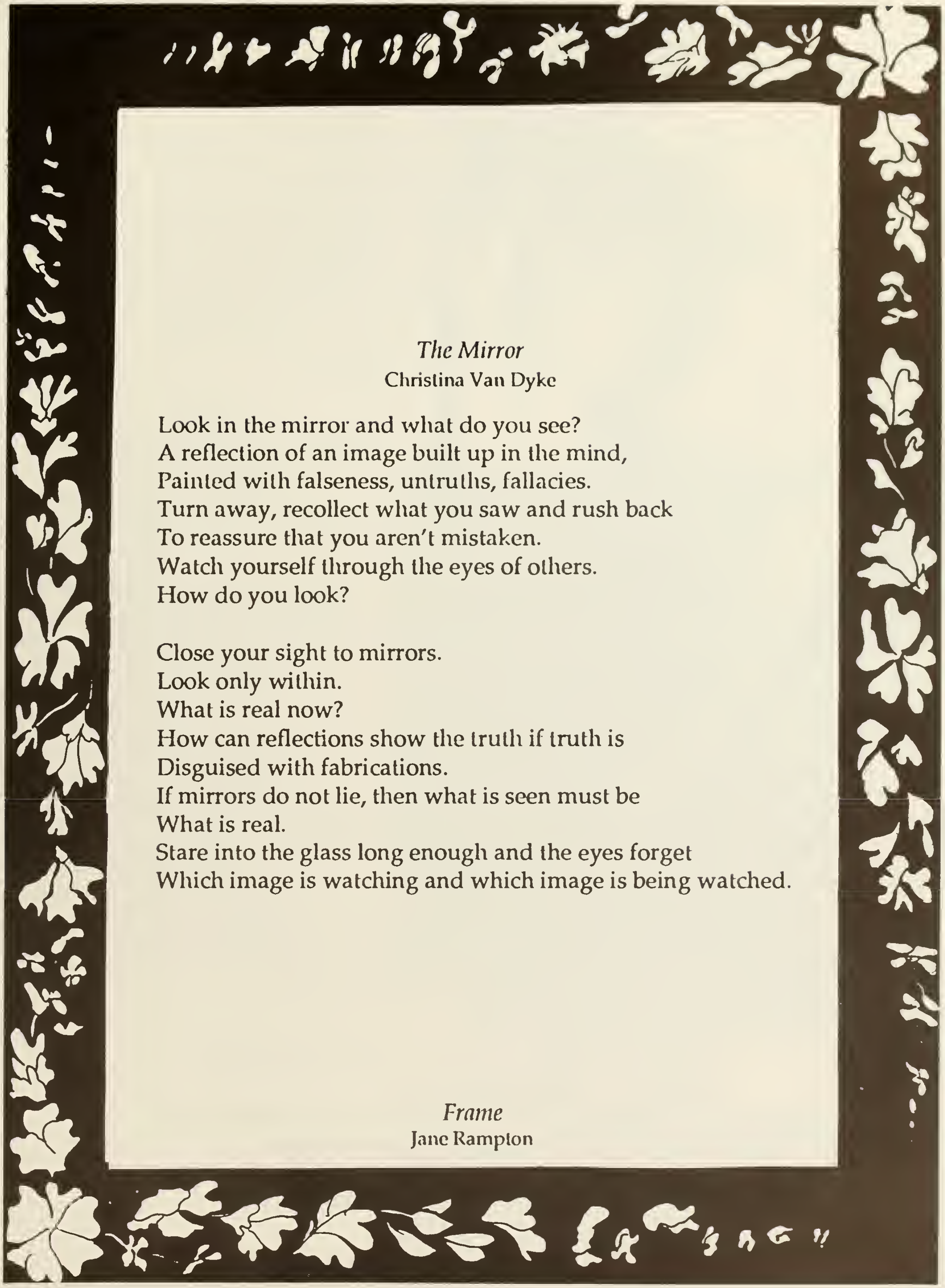
Tybee Tides
Joan Lehon

The Mirror

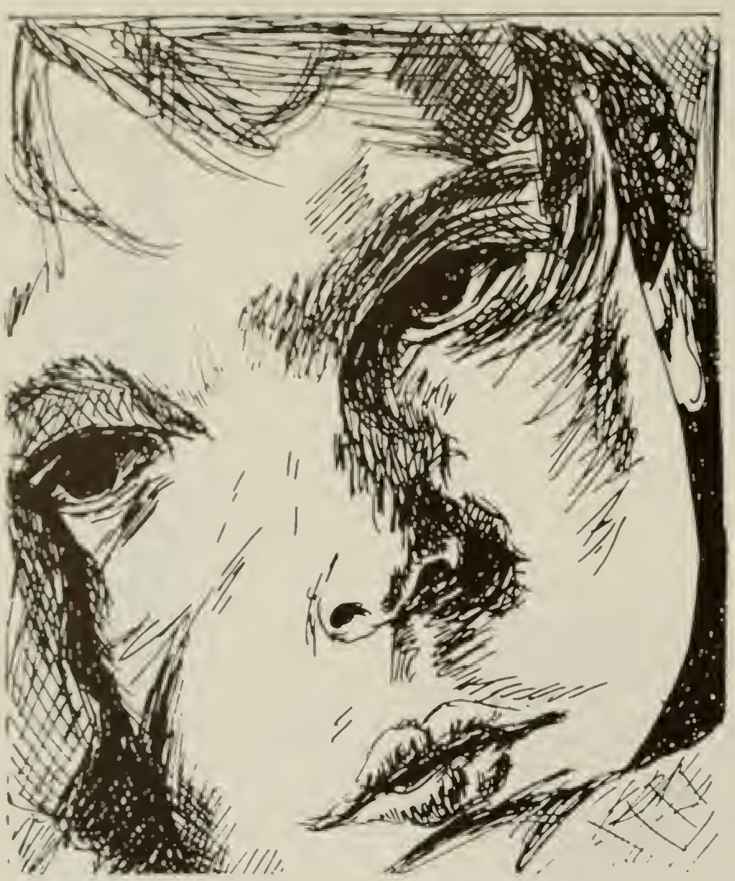
Christina Van Dyke

Look in the mirror and what do you see?
A reflection of an image built up in the mind,
Painted with falseness, untruths, fallacies.
Turn away, recollect what you saw and rush back
To reassure that you aren't mistaken.
Watch yourself through the eyes of others.
How do you look?

Close your sight to mirrors.
Look only within.
What is real now?
How can reflections show the truth if truth is
Disguised with fabrications.
If mirrors do not lie, then what is seen must be
What is real.
Stare into the glass long enough and the eyes forget
Which image is watching and which image is being watched.



Frame
Jane Rampton



Contemplation
Jane Rampton

I Damn Thee, I Curse Thee My Pale Tormentor
Dane Creamer

I damn thee, I curse thee my pale
tormentor;
My manhood, with a mumbled word
you have taken.
Ignorance, loud as trumpets, blasts
from your vocal chords.
O, how I ponder shields and wars and
bloody shores.

Ah, but is not my obsession my own
curse?
At night I sleep and dream of my
progeny's birth;
No longer mine, no longer mine;
Ghosts I see at midnight chime.

With my new found course, I shall
embrace the spring sun—
But still I damn thee, I curse thee— the
puritan one.

The Innocents
Julie Scott

I hear a man mutter in the language
of his kingdom
A broken umbrella his staff, an imaginary
friend his court jester
I see a pregnant young woman sitting
with her back to the cold brick wall
rubbing her unborn child with a dirty,
yet dainty hand
She hums "Jesus Loves Me" and tucks her
greasy hair behind her ear
I feel the rough hand of an old, wrinkled man
and turn quickly to see a child aging
by the second
A little boy in clothes not made for him,
still he cherishes them
I turn to run from the motley face and
running nose
only to awake

(or Maybe)
S. Vann

Paranoid
(or Maybe a-nnoyed)
The roar in my head,
The Screaming voices of past frustrations.
(or it May be the hum of the industrial capacity air
conditioner.)
Made louder by the Silence of benevolent strangers
(or there may Be a chill in the air)
that makes me cold.
(Maybe they are not so kind.)

Liquid Fixation
J. Michael Brown

I never had an idea
That I'd miss you so
You told me you'd go
I never showed my fear
Now it seems so long ago
The curtain closed the show
I shed so many tears—
My life became a haze
So many empty days
Their talk burned my ears
I need to change my ways
But it's a habit that stays
I'm losing.

Dad's Forty
Laura S. Green

Europa

Michael Eugene Bowman

You were born a dowdy barbarian
With your bloodstained swaddling clothes covering
From Gibraltar's Rock to Ural peaks grand,
From Svalbard's iced-land to Malta shining
Weak were your limbs which grew to unveiling:
Fairest Greek, Celt, Latin, Slav, and Teuton.
Thenceforth, you struck yourself; scaring alone.
Through the landscape tottered your limbs swinging;
Till worthy dirt was grasped and sat upon.
Tenacious limbs dug with clench stiffening.
Do you hear, dear Europa?

First, your eyes opened the Athenians;
Your brain imploded with knowledge clinging.
Then, Asia first shoved your breast with Persians;
Your anger poured while you stood unflinching.
Out grew your muscle with Roman swelling
To impel you and all with escutcheons,
Till again Asia wrapped your throat with Huns.
Prostrate you lay till Hilda's offering.
Dazed, you embraced Christ and crucifixion,
And stretching limbs became obsessed with kings.
Can you hear, dear Europa?

Mohammed drenched you in Spain and Balkans,
Till from Tours came your son's hammer blowing
Blood across the Mediterranean.
Then your eyes widened with your dress beaming;
You slung your genes the world over, seizing
For greed's sake, America's gold and lawn.
On Africa's wrist you placed chains upon.
Master of the world's seas, you sailed, hounding
All life ungrasped by your fist of iron
Oblivious to the vengeance kindling.
Will you hear, dear Europa?

Lucerne
Dianne Daniels

Now your clouded eyes face the blood-red dawn,
Where demons and avenging lions spawn.
Lay down your jewels old lady, pale and white
And reach for righteous spirit long since gone,
Or succumb to death's wind and endless night.
Are you deaf, dear Europa?

The Perpetuation of the Patriarchy in *A Raisin in the Sun*

Frances C. Petrasek

Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* is lauded for its examination of black issues such as African American identity, African political issues, family interpersonal relationships, and class collisions, and it is through the Younger family that we learn, additionally, about the pursuit of dreams. Moreover, the author touches on women's issues, but these are of minor importance in comparison to the aforementioned. The character Beneatha is an accomplishment when she is viewed from 1959, the year in which the play was first produced. From a 1991 perspective, however, she fails to exemplify a fully liberated woman. While Hansberry does challenge the reigning patriarchal ideology, patriarchal stereotypes and ideals abound and are supported throughout the work through not only the male characters, but also via Mama, Ruth, and to a minimal degree, Beneatha.

Our initial glimpse into the play acquaints us with a typical Younger family morning routine. An alarm clock sounds, yet it is Ruth who first arises and who must arouse the sleeping males of the family, as well as prepare and serve breakfast, ready her son and her husband for the coming day, and groom herself—in that order. Her grooming consists of "wiping her face with a moist cloth and running her fingers through her hair" (25) before donning an apron over her housecoat. Thus, she is prepared to attack a basketful of severely wrinkled clothes. Additionally, she is the primary, however much ignored, disciplinarian. She tells her son after he finishes his breakfast that he "can get over there and make up [his] bed" (29). He folds the bedding into a heap. Travis is a ten year old boy who not only must be told what to do, but who virtually always is set free of responsibility through his grandmother. Mama dismisses the sloppy job with her comment to Ruth, "he tries, don't he?" (40) Mama folds the bedding. Mama's act sends two primary messages to Travis. First, he does not have to do what he is urged to do because another, a female, will do it for him. Most importantly, he receives the message that he, in Mama's words, "aint supposed to know 'bout housekeeping" (40). Overriding Ruth's authority, Mama clearly teaches that domestic work is beneath a male child's "dignity;" it is woman's work.

Mama, Ruth, and Beneatha suffer from cultural, social, and economic disabilities in a patriarchal society, as well as what Beneatha aptly dubs "acute ghetto-itis." It is Walter Younger who exemplifies from whence comes the oppression, though ironically it is these three women who help him to maintain his "masculinity." Mysogynistic in attitude, Walter blames his problems on being "tied to a race of women with small minds" (35), and on "ants who can't understand what it is the giant is talking about" (85).

Walter's bitter attitude is best shown through his response to Ruth, who asks him why he doesn't hurry up and go into the banking business with his friends and stop talking about it. "Why? ... 'Cause we [men] are tied up in a race of [female] people that don't know how to do nothing but moan, pray and have babies!" (87) Walter conveniently fails to acknowledge the male's fifty percent in reproduction. Furthermore, Walter perpetuates and undergirds negative attitudes within the family while role-modeling them for Travis. In Act I, Scene II, Ruth refuses Travis' request for fifty cents because they do not have it. Walter, eyes fixed on Ruth, doles out the sum to Travis and doubles it. After Travis leaves for school, Walter must beg carfare from Ruth after the previously mentioned "manly" act. Abreast with Mama, Walter simultaneously torpedoes

Ruth's authority and teaches Travis that it is the male who supplies the children with pleasures and fulfills their needs. Ruth, therefore, is negated from all cultural standpoints and becomes, in de Beauvoir's term, the "Other" or negative object (Richter, 1066). Culturally, Walter is the defining and dominating "Subject" in the work.

In terms of masculine and feminine, the Subject is virtually always active, dominating, adventurous, and rational, while the Other is passive, acquiescent, emotional and conventional. Mama as the Other plans and defines for Walter what is masculine and what it means to be "a man," most often by means of her deceased husband, Big Walter. Mama quotes Big Walter, who "always said being any kind of servant wasn't a fit thing for a man to have to be ... a man's hands was to make things, or to turn the earth with"(103). The concept of patriarch is upheld herein, as Mama most likely assumes that since Big Walter said that to serve wasn't fit for a man, he implied that servanthood *is* fitting for a woman.

Ironically it is Mama's hands which "turn the earth," since she yearns for a garden and does so on a small scale with her potted plant. According to Big Walter's version of male, Mama is near-male and serves as a father-surrogate. Even more ironic, however, is that this excellent, fine Walter as an example of "man" is tainted with the fact that "there was plenty wrong with Walter Younger—hardheaded, mean, kind of wild with women" (45). The younger Walter's misogyny has its roots in his father, as Big Walter "sure loved his children ... Always wanted them to have something"(45). That something, sadly, came only after his death, bypassed his wife as when he lived, only to slip through his male progeny's fingers.

Big Walter's daughter, Beneatha, however proves the sole, though slightly weak, challenger to the male-dominated culture. From the play's outset, Beneatha rarely acts the subordinate. She does falter occasionally, but she succeeds greatly in asserting her cultural views, thereby upsetting the patriarchy. At the close of Act I, Scene II, Beneatha proclaims to Mama and Ruth that everybody had better understand that she is going to be a doctor, to which Mama adds, "God willing" (50). Beneatha contends that God is an idea which she does not accept, and further, that it is because of its own stubborn effort that the human race achieves. As penance for her argument, she receives a slap in the face from Mama, but as she explains to Ruth, "All the tyranny in the world will never put a God in the heavens!" (52) Beneatha's opinions seem crudely presented, but it is these powerful statements which buck the status quo and cause us to bristle, react, and consider.

Beneatha's dictums by no means end with religion, as she discloses her political feelings to Mama in Act I, Scene II: "[Africans] need more salvation from the British and the French" (57). In Act I, Scene I, she talks about artistic freedom. Mama accuses her of flitting from one thing to another because, from year to year, Beneatha involves herself in interests which range from play-acting to photography. Flitting, however, is all in one's perspective as Beneatha points out, "I don't flit ... I experiment with different forms of expression ... People have to express themselves one way or another" (48). Beneatha underscores the fact that it is important for women, as well as for men, to grow, discover and pursue their dreams.

Beneatha, additionally, does not see marriage as her sole option in careers. A college student pursuing medicine, she dates two men, both also students. George

Murchison, son of a rich local family, and Joseph Asagai, a Nigerian, differ culturally, but their views on marriage and sex share similarities. "You're a nice looking girl . . . all over," George tells her. "Guys aren't going to go for the atmosphere—they're going to go for what they see. Be glad for that" (90). On the other hand, Asagai wants Beneatha to marry him and go to Nigeria with him. Despite Ruth, who thinks that Beneatha is odd because she would not marry Murchison, "that pretty, rich thing" (49), Beneatha rises above these chain-laden options at the play's end. She and Walter exchange verbal barbs about whom Beneatha should marry. Though she toys with the idea of going to Africa, Beneatha chooses neither Asagai nor Murchison, and is least likely to choose a mate based solely on looks or money. In order to marry either George or Joseph, she would have to meet them on their terms. She does not, however, step down from her standards for the "comfort and security" the two boyfriends each offer through marriage. Through her refusal, Beneatha thumbs her nose at a tradition which dictates that if a woman marries after age twenty one, she is an "old maid."

The author unfortunately limits Beneatha in her freedom and independence, and this particular character's major flaw is that she relies upon males financially. Murchison and Asagai pay for the evening out, understandably since they have money and she does not. There is, however, no mention of Beneatha's part-time job. Her family supports her economically, thereby grooming her to expect the male to pay for her entertainment, education and meals. To Beneatha, males provide. Walter is the family member who inevitably, thanks to Mama, controls her medical school tuition, therefore controlling her dream unless she is willing to assume this responsibility herself. Walter loses the tuition money in a business proposition gone bad, but Beneatha's response is to cave in. "Me? ... Me? Me, I'm nothing," she emotionally reveals to Asagai. She bitterly contends that she has stopped caring, and that, "while I was sleeping ... people went right out and took the future right out of my hands!" (134) Asagai's wise words point out that there is "something wrong in a house ... world ... where all dreams ... must depend upon the death of a man" (135). Regrettably, the apothegm ends with "a man" and not "anyone." Additionally, the saying fails to address the instances wherein dreams depend upon another, living or dead, man or woman.

Beneatha does, however, have the attributes she needs to pursue her dreams independently and to dispute the patriarchal stereotypes of women, but the author, through her female characters, seems to simultaneously bring to light covert sexual biases while she internalizes and supports the reigning patriarchal ideology. Beneatha's attitude toward Walter's power *could* amount to merely a temporary hindrance of her growing independence, but the character is not developed to this extent. Though Mama and Ruth are strong women, they spend their energy on helping others pursue and fulfill their dreams, while consciously or unconsciously perpetuating patriarchal ideology. The Younger family's move to Clybourne Park is a supposed cure to the prevailing "ghetto-itis," but Hansberry offers no resolution to the family's several other problems. While the work closely examines several cultural issues from the Black perspective, it only begins to examine feminist issues. ■

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Dreams I've Forgotten
Wendi Addis

Sometimes late at night
Before the moon is full
I dream of strange things
Things other than I should.

I dream of the Forbidden fruit,
And the Journey before the Fall,
And I wonder if the Story's truth
Is really true at all.

I dream of the plains of Kansas,
And Dorothy with her dog.
And wonder if she truly left home,
Or was it a dream after all.

I dream I travel to the moon
And meet a handsome man there.
He calls my name, takes my hand
And runs his fingers through my hair.

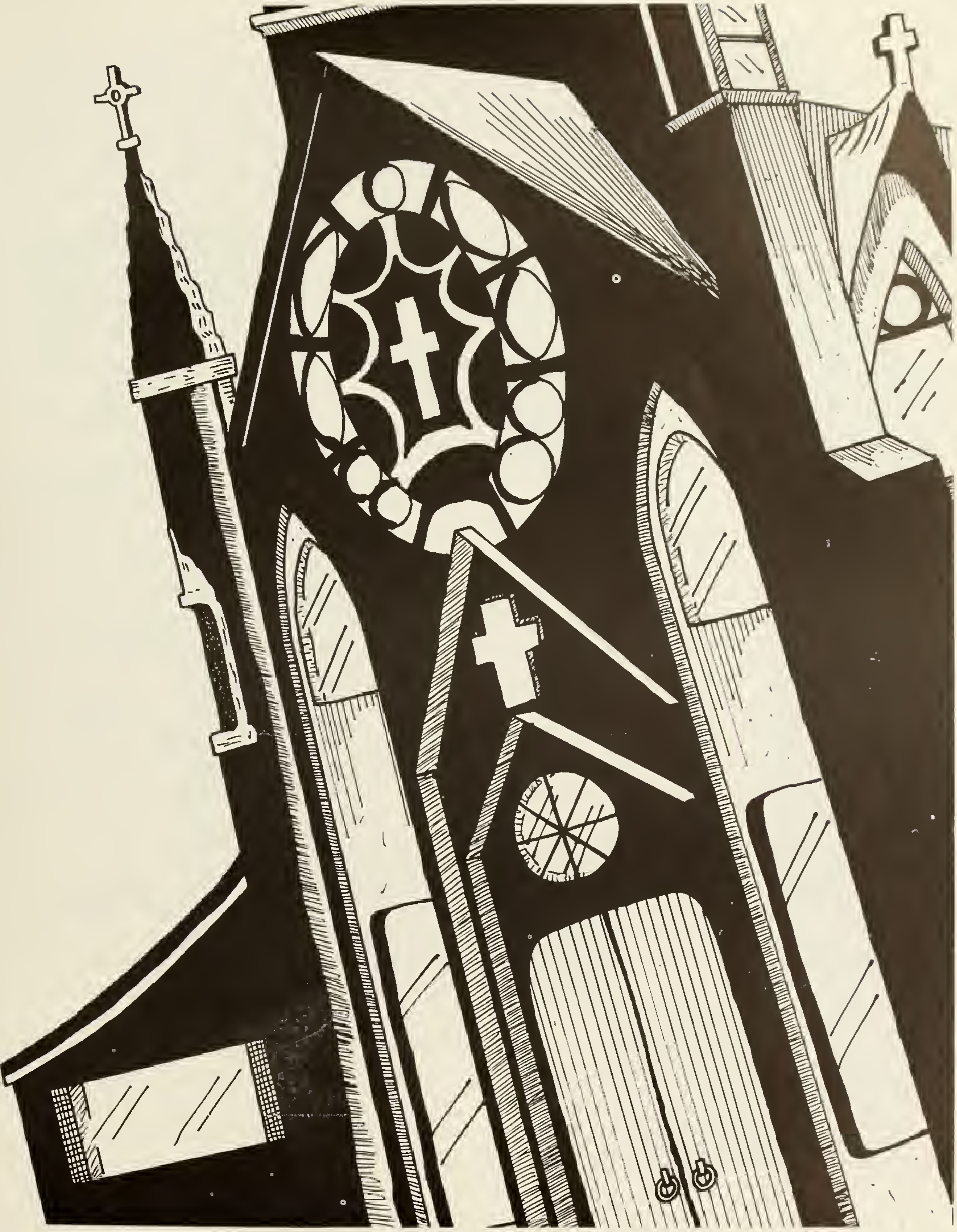
He whispers that he wants me
And takes me violently.
And when the deed is done
He leaves me silently.

And sometimes I dream the end
Is very near for me,
And then I wake and see the sun
And remember none of these.

Crooked Cathedral
Mike Torrance

Prayer for a Rapist
Katy Pace Byrd

Home that he may be invaded
Strength that he may be overcome
Light that he may curse the dark
Joy that he may despair
Faith that he may lose conviction
Heaven that he may be damned.



Pain, Distance and Time

L. Kelly Waters

The lure of "Neutral Tones" by Thomas Hardy is in its subtle familiarity. Although the poem describes the breaking off of a relationship, the reader quickly finds the speaker is neither fondly nor bitterly recalling the event. By avoiding every sensory image except for sight, abstaining from definition, and coloring in neither bright nor dark tones, the author purposefully distances the reader from the event. The poem's appeal lies not in its allusion to lost love, but in the passing of pain with time. This pale scene reveals the aging of painful memories that occurs but each of us so often forgets.

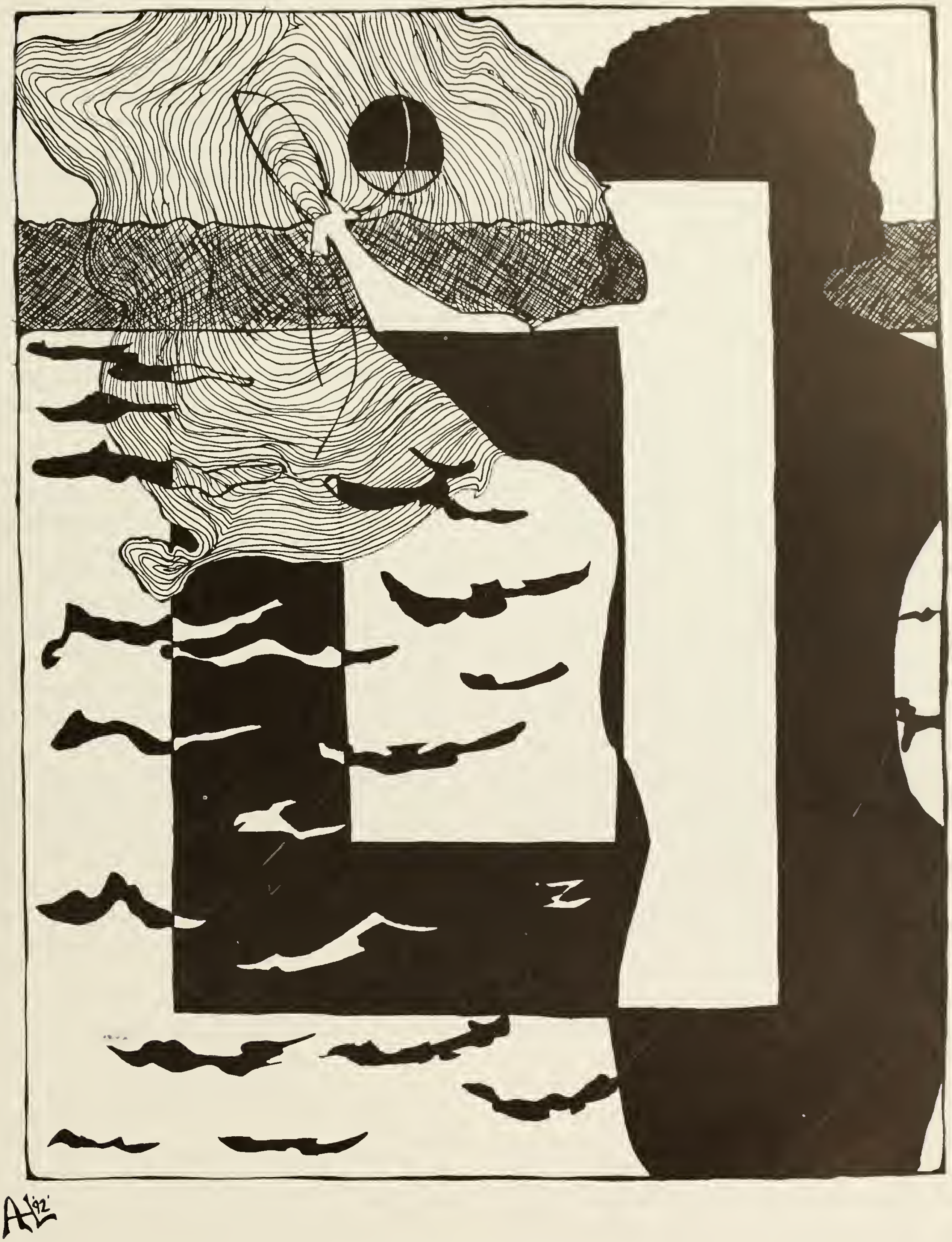
The first clue that the poem conveys something more than a painful memory is in the title. "Neutral Tones" immediately encourages the reader to postpone any positive or negative inferences until the author makes his meaning clear. In a sense we are left out rather than taken in. This is the first of many distancing devices.

To describe the scene without placing the reader in it, the author creates images using the sense most commonly used from a distance: sight. Not only does the author avoid contact with the other senses, he methodically insures this isolation. We see a sun without warmth: "And the sun was white, as though chidden of God" (line 2). He portrays words as costly and attributes them with physical rather than acoustical characteristics: "And some words played between us to and fro/ On which lost the more by our love" (7-8). While smells are simply avoided, the dearth of tastes is re-enforced: "And a few leaves lay on the starving sod" (3). Using images appealing only to sight helps to produce this view from the outside looking in.

Similarly, the poem's lack of definition allows the reader to see this painful memory as similar to a personal experience without demanding the recollection of details better forgotten. Several things are purposely unclear: whether the speaker is male or female, which person ended the relationship, and who, if anyone, was at fault. This comfortable obscurity encourages the reader to identify with the speaker, and assures that the similarity is tenuous at best. Instead of pushing the reader out, the distance here is created by pulling the reader in, but only to the point of familiarity.

It is at this point of subtle recognition that the "Neutral Tones" come into play. Perhaps the most obvious distinction of the poem is its total lack of color. Like a black and white photograph, the "grayish leaves" and "white" sun yield much the same effect as the references to death and the mention of time gone by: "Since then" (13). They all create distance in time. Drained of its color, this poem is a memory on the edge of death, the expectation of which is a relief to its owner.

Disrobing, defusing and discharging painful memories is the whole point of the poem. Sometimes we ardently avoid memories because we remember that the memories were painful before, not because they are painful now. Hardy demonstrates pain's aging is pleasant, its future is bright. Separated by comforting time, drawn by its subtle familiarity and contending with a tempting perspective, the reader is encouraged to explore old wounds. The realization that pain subsides with time is not always an easy one—pain is often easier to ignore than to reflect on. ■



Woman Throwing a Cast Net
Andrew H. Lentini

Potentially Nobody

Doug Walker

When Victor woke up, the sun burned his eyes so he rolled over and faced the back of the bench. His wincing features relaxed and gave way to a smile when he realized how far he must have fallen to be so attached to a park bench. This morning marked the thirty-fourth consecutive evening on the bench, and Victor considered it somehow his. In all fairness, as benches go, it was exceptional. It was a full six feet long, sparing Victor two inches, and, miraculously, the birds bypassed it so it stayed relatively clean. Victor didn't question this phenomenon, for that would jinx his luck. The crisp morning air told him that winter was coming, and he knew it would be harsh, but Victor tried not to think about bad things—he lived for today and today would be beautiful.

Victor arose and gathered his things. He decided not to go to the shelter for breakfast because it tended to depress him. He didn't feel like the rest of the men there; he was different. At the shelter, they were more than just homeless; they seemed hopeless to Victor. And whenever he went there, Terry bored him with stories of his past achievements and his future plans to get back on top—"I'm just in a rut now, ya know," he would tell Victor, "and as soon as my plan comes together, I'll be back on the fast track, ya know?" Victor knew that at fifty-three years old, Terry wouldn't make it to the fast track, and would be lucky to get a bed that night at the shelter. He honestly felt sorry for ol' Terry—"Damn fool," Victor whispered to himself. As he passed a store front window, he decided to check himself out: his sandy, tan boots advertised how many years he had spent on a construction site, his blue Dickies were holeless, and his denim shirt was only partially wrinkled, but the breast pocket would have to be reattached, as it was folding over at one corner. He licked his hand and patted down the hair that had risen while he slept to form a hill on the crown of his head. The salt and pepper whiskers were coming back so he could have used a shave, but, all in all, Victor felt he looked fine. In the bottom corner of the window he noticed a HELP WANTED sign which disappointed him because just yesterday he had been told that the position had been filled. Again, Victor decided not to question this, knowing the Lord would provide.

As he rounded a corner, Victor walked headlong into a man.

"Oh, excuse me. Are you O.K.?"

"For Chrissakes! Why don't you watch where you're going?" The suit adjusted his tie and rushed off, never taking his eyes off the ground. Victor didn't know what to make of the man's abrasiveness so he shrugged his shoulders and proceeded down the street. Halfway down the same block he ran across one of those secretaries who wear tennis shoes with their dresses. Partly tickled by the incident with the suit, Victor grinned.

"Mornin', " he said. This woman reacted as if Victor had also run into her. "I don't have any change," she said as she clutched her purse, tucked her head, and quickened her pace.

"Change? Who wants her change?" Victor thought. He couldn't believe people would act this way on such a glorious morning. Maybe the fact that he hadn't shaved made him seem threatening to her, he thought. For whatever reason, Victor decided he'd better not speak to anyone he passed—that would solve the problems.

For the rest of the morning, he walked along the main street of the business district. The higher the sun rose, the higher his spirits rose, and the warmer it became down in the urban valley, the more confident he became. Everyone on the sidewalks was equal, and although they had different itineraries, they all—together—made up this downtown Tuesday morning.

It was this feeling of naive optimism that brought Victor into Rex's—"Where men's fashions make a statement." Since pedestrian traffic was thinning, he thought he would just pop in and browse for awhile. He was immediately greeted by an overanxious manager.

"Excuse me, sir, can I help you?"

"No, thank you. I'm just looking right now," Victor said whimsically and walked by him.

Insisting—"SIR, can I HELP you?"

Turning—"No. THANK you."

The manager walked up very close to Victor, ducked his head and whispered,

"Look, let's not cause a scene. You obviously aren't going to buy anything, so please leave."

Victor rested his hand on the manager's shoulder to assure him and whispered, "You're causing the scene. Now please leave me alone."

The manager leaped backward and slapped Victor's hand away.

"Get your hands off me! Now look, I've tried to be nice about this, but if you don't leave, I'll have to call the police!"

At that moment, Victor realized most of the people in the store were staring at him. The skirt in the shoe department was giggling under her breath and another manager stepped out from behind the counter, crossed his arms over his chest and stared with aggression in his eyes at Victor. Customers gawked and whispered light-heartedly amongst themselves, and one little girl couldn't resist pointing her tiny, untouched finger and laughing. Victor's blank stare and tense jaw showed how angry and humiliated he was. He turned very slowly and walked out of the store with as much dignity and pride as a man in his position could muster.

Outside, Victor was greeted by the toxic exhaust of a passing bus. The fumes made his face grimace and eyes water. Across the street, he saw a man ranting about salvation, cursing Jews and homosexuals. As Victor turned, a foul-smelling man with no front teeth approached.

"Hey man, gimme a dollar."

"No," said Victor, backing away in virtual fear. "No," he repeated.

"Watch out," said the suit Victor backed into.

"I'm sorry, alright? I'm sorry," snapped Victor. He turned around and quickened his pace.

"Accept Christ or suffer the wrath of Hell ..." said the preacher, but soon the pounding of his boots was all he heard. As he ran down the middle of the sidewalk, Victor couldn't make out the watery faces of the people he passed, but he felt their condemnation. He wanted to knock the blurred images over. He wanted to make them fall. He ran faster. He'd had enough. He saw their prejudice. It was ugly. He wouldn't shave ... for the tennis-shoed secretary ... He wouldn't watch ... where he was going ... for Christ's sake . . . He would ... cause a scene ... He would ... demand that job ... He would go ... where ... he ... wanted. The run was far more than Victor's middle-aged body was accustomed to, so he eased himself to the sidewalk. He rested his head on his forearms which were resting on his knees. Victor could have easily been mistaken for being asleep or simply pathetic.

After he caught his breath, Victor remained seated to collect his thoughts. Until now, he had prided himself in his

The Door
Jacquelynn Nessmith

ability to stay composed. He was ashamed—ashamed of his reaction and ashamed of his predicament. Just then, a quarter fell between his feet. He looked up to see a young man.

"You need that more than I do."

Victor was shocked! Speechless! Who did that kid think he was? He didn't need his money! Only street people take handouts, not unemployed construction workers! He stood and watched the presumptuous boy cross the street. Victor turned to walk in the opposite direction. He got a few steps away and then looked back to see the quarter still lying on the sidewalk. Victor paused, thinking of the implications. He looked around for an audience, and when he found none, quickly picked up the coin and walked away.

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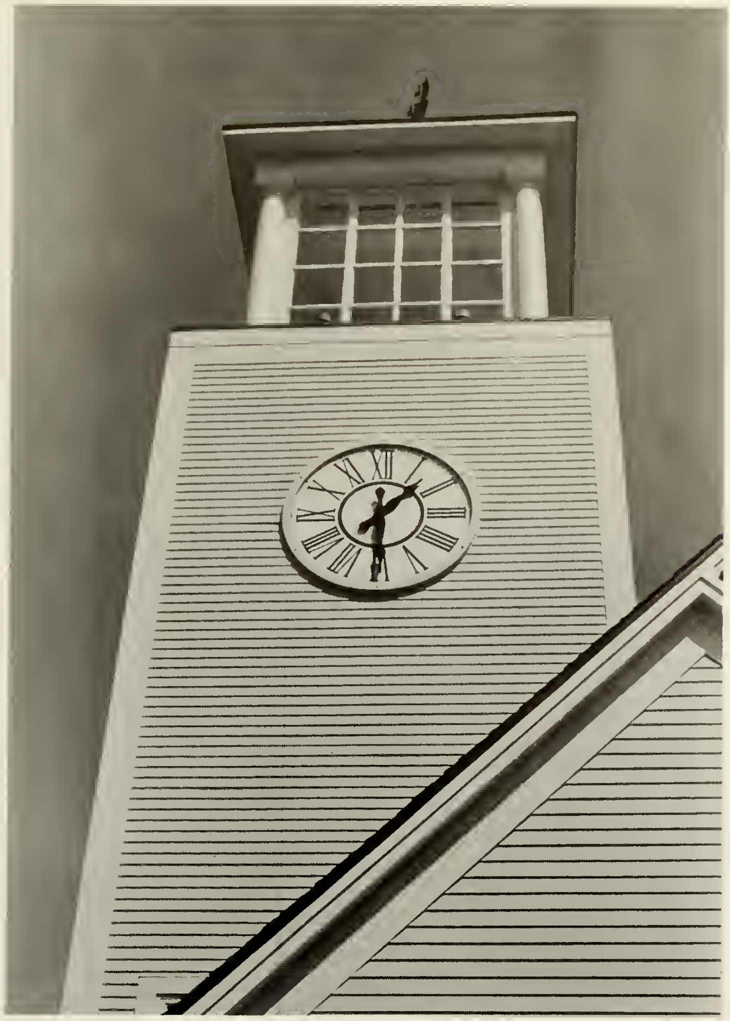


Quelle heure est-il?
Lynn Wilson

Then we looked closelier at Time,
And saw his ghostly arms revolving
To sweep off woeful things with prime,
Things sinister with things sublime
        Alike dissolving.

Going and Staying
Thomas Hardy

Doctor's Visit

Gayle Whitaker

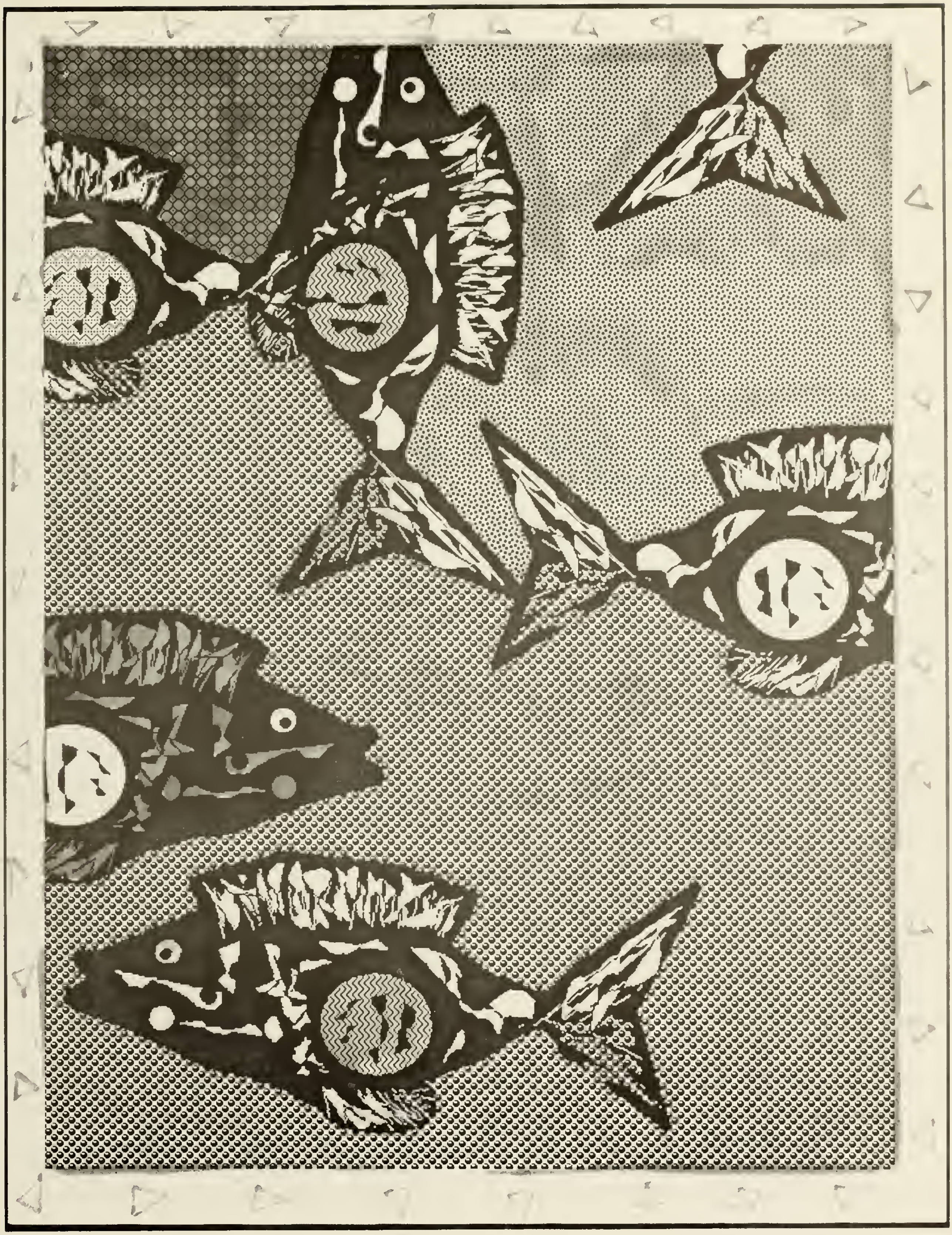
He takes my hand to climb the path
And counts the birds to learn his math.
His tiptoe gait exhausts his will.
Halfway there he lifts his arms—
We top the hill in tight embrace
While singing of MacDonald's Farm.

The waiting room is filled with stares—
I quickly spot two empty chairs.
We choose a book to pass the time,
And smoothing his hair, so flyaway light,
I read out a tale of bears
And linger a touch: a mother's right.

I trace his ear with my fingertip
While fantasizing of our getaway trip:
We'll ride a space ship past the moon,
And when the weather's nice and we can swim
Like fish … we'll come and visit—
Perhaps in June … and then I look at him—

How treacherous life's become for us!
"Uh, Mrs. Gray …" she interrupts.
We trail behind her constant chatter
And follow her to a tiny room.
She treats us like we're closest friends—
Her cheery air leaves me in gloom.

I tickle him on the papered bed,
His laugh does little to ease my dread.
The hanging drape sweeps open wide—
He enters with a practiced smile.
My boy's small hand and mine entwine.
"I've been looking at your son's file …."



One Fish, Two Fish
Kathy Whitney

My Little Girl

Joe Lee

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A LITTLE GIRL NAMED KATIE

AND HER DADDY LOVED HER MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD

AND EVERYWHERE THEY WENT, KATIE WOULD SAY,

I'M DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL

This is how it would be. After all these years, he would be a father, a proud, proud father.

His wife would be home soon. She would know. She would tell him, but first she would tease him.

He continued to polish the car, the shiny gray car. He studied his reflection in the polish and thought about the lines creeping in around his eyes. He wondered about his age. Would it affect him as a father? Could he be a good father? He wanted a son that would carry on the family name. He was sorry that his father had not lived to see his grandchild born. He knew about right from wrong, Little League and college. He would give his son all of the knowledge and love that he could. His son would have all of the advantages that he had done without, and, unlike his father, would not have to wait until he was well into adulthood to really understand the world.

She turned quickly into the driveway and the car door sprang open.

"Well?" he said.

She smiled.

"Well, what?" his wife said.

He knew she would make him work to find out.

"It's a boy?"

"No."

"Come on. Tell me the truth," he said as she walked nearer to him.

"I am telling the truth. It's a girl."

Bobby would let her off the hook for teasing him.

"It's alright. You can tell me the truth. I won't be mad because you've been kidding me."

"I'm not kidding. It's a girl!" Her joy had turned. She was becoming upset. "What's wrong with that?" she snapped.

"I just knew it would be a boy. I don't know anything about girls. What can I teach a girl?"

"She's a person. You can teach her to be a person, can't you?"

From that moment on, things were different. His wife was right and he was ashamed. Over the months, waiting for his little girl to arrive, he imagined all the things that they would do together and how much he would love her.

The wait for his daughter, like this drive home, seemed to be an eternity. Baltimore, the place of her conception, seemed like years ago. Shortly after her beginning, Bobby had moved his expecting wife to the South. He would be in college and between quarters if their daughter was born as expected. He was proud that his little girl had impeccable timing.

"That's my girl," he would say when he told people of her anticipated arrival date.

A fawn lay dead on the side of the island road. Her mangled mass was recognizable only by her spots. It was a tragedy, but a hundred yards away other older deer stood grazing, seemingly not bothered by the sudden recent death. He wondered how this could be. When his father died, his mother received so much attention. The attention was almost like fame, but it was a fleeting fame that was not nearly worth the misery. Soon she was alone again with her thoughts, her pain and loneliness. Bobby, too, had left her alone. Guilt still remained.

His wife's time was so near that she was almost immobile. Bobby walked out across the island to the old wooden bridge across the narrow part of the stream. A plank was missing at the peak of the bridge, and he had to stand with one foot on each side of the opening as he watched the murky water of the life-giving stream flow under his feet towards the darkening ocean. The sunset was unusually yellow. He watched the sky blackening as the evening's yellow light faded. He watched, too, as the spots on the fallen fawn faded into darkness.

Bobby sat quietly in the birthing room, almost bored. His wife was doing fine and everything was on schedule, including the nurses. They would come in whenever he was about to fall asleep, so the long night just got longer.

At daybreak the doctor came in. Katie was still several hours away.

A nurse Bobby had not seen before arrived with the morning. She checked his wife, turned and said, "I don't want to scare you but we've got a problem. Things are going to happen pretty fast from here on."

She sent out a frantic message for the doctor. Bobby remembered what a prolapsed cord was. An operating room was lined up. He watched the monitor as his little girl's heart rate faded rapidly. He could not tell his wife that this was happening, but he sensed that she knew. She was completely still with her head back on the pillow for the first time in a long time as if she had snapped into complete resignation. She knew her baby was beyond her help.

The doctor returned and began disconnecting monitors and tubes. Bobby watched the screen turn black. A small herd of people moved quickly by the small opening in the door of the birthing room on the way to prepare for his wife's surgery. The nurse attempted to keep the life-giving stream flowing to Katie by keeping her head off the cord until surgery was ready, but without the monitor, only Katie knew if she was surviving.

After an eternity, when everything was disconnected, the doctor said, "Let's go!"

Bobby pulled the bed into the hallway and frantically, but silently, inquired the direction. Someone pointed. He heard other people in the hall talking about their lives and their new babies. From behind the bed he pushed desperately. He wondered if they were too old to have a baby. The doctor and nurses caught up with him and helped him push. A voice directed at him from behind the desk at the side of the hall said, "Daddies can't go beyond the yellow line."

Bobby stopped. Resigned, he looked down. He stood with one foot on each side of a broad yellow line. He turned to the voice. There was no help. He wondered how this could be. He heard the operating room doors spring open.

His thousand thoughts were swirling so that everything seemed in slow motion. Daddy? Don't you have to have a child to be a daddy? Did he have a child? Would he? His little girl?

He reached into his back pocket for the letter he had written to Katie two days earlier. He looked back down at the yellow line between his feet while the black ocean of anguish and agony poured over him. He stood there motionless, watching the yellow line until it faded into darkness. ■

Rose
Tommy Harper

Inspiration

Tobias A. Brasier

Mary Mills always favored her grandmother. Their bond began early on. Mary was named after her grandmother. When Mary was a tiny infant, Gramma would spend hours with her, cooing, laughing, telling stories, saying nursery rhymes, reciting poetry. Gramma seemed to know every story and poem ever composed, and more, but that wasn't unusual. Gramma's father was a well-educated man who valued reading over everything. He was educated at Oxford, where his grandparents had come from their homeland of Greece. Mary's Gramma married a young student from the university, Raymond David Mills. After earning his doctorate in English Literature, Ray Mills took his young wife to America, where he enjoyed a long career of teaching at a university in Delaware. He also enjoyed a career as a novelist and poet, and his talents were lauded by all. Ray and his wife had one son, Mary's father. Nicholas Mills was also a talented man when it came to writing. Beginning with the walls of his bedroom and a red crayon, Nick was a writer. Nick majored in History, and by thirty became one of the leading authorities on the American Civil War. Like his father, Nick taught at the university level. Nick published three well-received books about the Civil War by his twenty-eighth birthday, each of them dedicated to his parents. Ray Mills died just four weeks before Nick married Anne, a mathematics professor from the college. A year later they had a daughter, Mary.

Nick always wanted to write a novel about the War, but fiction seemed to be the one form of writing out of his reach. If words came at all for this project, they came in the form of another critical survey of the War. He began writing it when he was twenty-five, and went to his father for assistance, but nothing Ray told him seemed to help. The only movement forward would come after his mother gave him words of encouragement: "It will be alright, Nicky." Nick eventually shelved the novel. He went on about the business of teaching and writing for journals of American history, marrying, and raising Mary.

For the first six years of her life, Mary had no sitter except for her Gramma, and Gramma's stories and rhymes filled her ears. When Nick asked Gramma how she knew all those stories, she replied that she learned them from her mother. Mary could repeat any tale Gramma told her, word for word, by the time she was six; Nick found this strange, but stranger that he couldn't remember any tale Gramma told two minutes after he'd heard it. After Mary turned six, Gramma died. Nick and Anne were saddened, mostly for Mary's sake, at Gramma's passing. Mary knew that death meant never coming back again, but she told her parents that it was alright, and touching her hand to her heart, she said that Gramma told her that she would always be "in here."

Nick decided to try his novel again, as a dedication to the memory of his mother. Two years he worked, with the results the same as before. He nearly threw out the scraps, but he couldn't bear to see them in the trash can. During the summer of his fortieth birthday , and Mary's eighth year, Nick took his family on a vacation to Rock Ridge, Tennessee, and rented a furnished house on the side of a mountain overlooking the battlefieldthe remote site of the most infamous battle of the Civil War.

One Saturday afternoon, Nick dozed on the king-sized bed he shared with Anne. Anne and Mary were out back of the house looking for war relics. Nick was dreaming of his mother. She was, as before, giving him words of encouragement: "It will be alright, Nicky," she said.

Will it be alright Nicky Daddy?

"Will it be alright, Daddy?"

Nick woke with a start. "What?"

"Will it be alright, Daddy?" Mary was standing next to Nick's head. "I'm tired, so Mommy let me come back for a nap. Will it be alright if I sleep here with you?"

"Sure. Climb."

Mary quickly dozed off, but Nick could not get back to sleep. He thought about the book. As he lay there giving the book what had to be its last desperate hope for life, Mary turned over in her sleep, and her right hand rested on Nick's chest, over his heart.

One year later Nick's novel, *A Nation in Torment*, published in four parts, met with universal critical success. On the title page read the dedication:

To the memory of my mother, Antonia Calliope Mills. To the future of my daughter, Mary Calliope Mills.

Moribund

Jason S. Richardson

I lie like a coiled snake
And watch him every day—
Everyday whistling, humming, walking
With a gleeful stride.
I lie here waiting to be used,
Waiting for something different—
Something different indeed.

I lie like a coiled snake
And watch him every day—
Everyday no whistling, no humming,
Just a melancholy stride.
I lie here waiting to be used,
Waiting for something different—
Something different indeed.

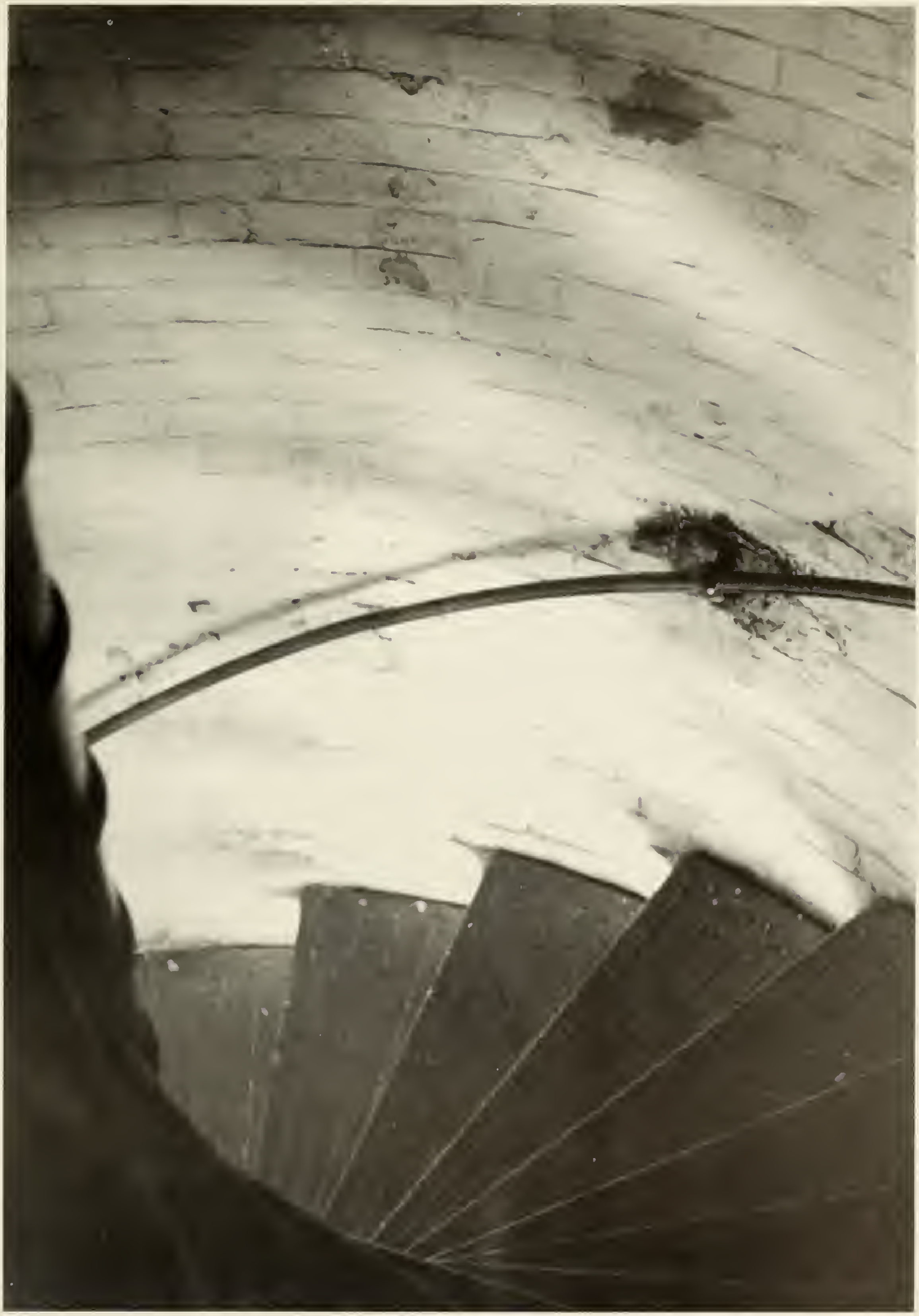
Late one dark anniversary,
He comes to me crying.
With faltering hands he lifts me,
As if I am an answer.
Something different indeed.

I am hanging from a rafter.
With trembling hands he pulls me
Tighter around his pale neck—
A neck which once wore kisses
But now wears only me.

I draw as taut as a guitar string,
As he steps into nothingness.
With white wetness his eyes
Roll in their sockets.

He claws at me with stupid hands,
As if he has changed his mind.

And only a short distance away
A new neck wears new kisses.



Passageway
Lisa Berry

Dear Sweet Mom

NJ

While some mothers-in-law are as pure as the driven snow (ignoring the fact that where there is acid rain, there must be acid snow) there are those who are simply the scourge of all married men who are unfortunate enough to have one that is still breathing. For those who are as unfortunate as this, there are those that are doubly unfortunate in that their mothers-in-law abide with them under the same roof, which is much worse than residing in the same country.

A mother-in-law in residence is the truest affliction that a man may carry. Give me crutches, let me wheel my way through the halls of life in a wheelchair, make me a bedridden quadraplegic, but God spare me the affliction of being exposed, analyzed, diced and pureed, filleted and splayed by the Great Perfectionist who had just as soon eat you as say one nice word to you.

Man has been cursed by this Icon to Sanctity since the institution of marriage was first recognized— back in the Dark Ages. Certainly Henry VIII had no such problem, but if he did, you can rest assured that he dealt with it most efficiently. Not that all mothers-in-law should be beheaded, just a select few.

For those men who are saddled with the misfortune of having your mother-in-law living with you and treating you as if you are the lowest form of life known to humankind, who acts as though you are still in your adolescence and have not a clue as to what life is all about, who makes you feel as though you are standing nude before a convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution— we have a solution.

Recently we discovered an organization, the whereabouts of which cannot at this time be disclosed due to security reasons. There exists within the continental boundaries of North America an organization consisting of fed-up Gentlemen of the Affliction. Operating under the name S.M.I.L.E. (Sons of Mothers-in-Law Entertainment), the group is apparently strong. Membership is well over one million, and for a one hundred dollar one-time fee, the benefits far outweigh the minor expense. With such a following, you can rest assured that Dear Sweet Mom will be well taken care of until her passing. Over one hundred million dollars has been contributed thus far, and the number of satisfied customers is equivalent to the number of members. Everybody is happy.

S.M.I.L.E. offers your worst nightmare a three-week trip, all expenses paid, to beautiful, warm Cozumel, Mexico. Your membership fee covers everything, and it even includes a two hundred fifty thousand dollar life insurance policy on your wife's mother.

In the middle of Mom's second week of vacation, you and your wife will receive an urgent telegram from the Mexican government stating, "Unfortunately Mrs. So and So, while basking in the warm waters in front of her hotel this morning, was the victim of a shark attack. We assume that she was devoured as we have little remains. Request your immediate response." While your wife will definitely be upset, you will have time to console her. S.M.I.L.E. will fly you both to Cozumel under the semblance of identifying a body. Upon your arrival the Mexican S.M.I.L.E. affiliates will provide you with what appears to be the remains of an elderly lady and the uppers from a set of false teeth. You and your wife must return home to announce the harsh reality of Mom's demise, but all the while, you are the only one who knows what has happened.

What truly transpired follows: You and your wife drove mother-in-law to the airport to see her off on her Cozumel vacation.

How excited she would be just knowing that she would have three weeks of uninterrupted bliss and rest and relaxation, away from that gusano son-in-law of hers, knowing that she would be fully prepared to give you pure hell upon her return because Cozumel would simply not be good enough, and besides, nobody down there would have understood a damn thing she had said and far be it from her to even vaguely understand their verbal presentations. But when you said goodbye to her this time, it was forever.

The plane was full of women when she got on it, all of them mothers-in-law, going on their S.M.I.L.E. vacations. The flight proceeded, presumably in a westerly direction, while your wife grovelled at your feet at dinner for being so kind and generous. Meanwhile, Mother thought that she would have soon deplaned to step onto the humid tarmac at Cozumel International only to get a little curious when she heard over the loudspeaker: "Ladies, this is your Captain speaking. We will unfortunately be in a holding pattern for the next four hours. It appears that the son-in-law of the Mexican President's wife has, in a drunken state, seized all power and closed Cozumel International Airport until more tequila can be delivered from Ixtapa. We apologize for this inconvenience."

The plane, loaded with mothers-in-law from throughout the nation, was suddenly filled with excited whispers of irate, gossiping women. One retorted, "My God! Her son-in-law is drunk and has taken over the airport! Can you imagine?!" The ladies sat there continuing to knit putrid colored afghans, and another replied, "For more tequila, too! The drunken scum!" Anothered blathered, "Men. I swear. They're all alike. Sounds just like something my baby's Jeffrey would do! Why, just the other night he came in from fishing and was so drunk he fell right off the porch into that foot tub of old squirmy, slimy catfish he'd brought home. I swear to goodness, he was picking those old prickly old catfish out of his behind and I said to him, "Why Jeffrey!" She was interrupted by the loudspeaker. "This is your Captain speaking. Ladies, unfortunately the son-in-law of the Mexican President's wife still refuses to open the airport. It seems that his father has now joined him and they are both ranting for more tequila. We are re-routing our flight to Albuquerque, New Mexico, however, for the night. Food and lodging will be provided by your local S.M.I.L.E. representative as soon as we disembark. In the morning we will resume our flight to Cozumel at nine o'clock sharp. Again, we apologize for this inconvenience, and we thank you for your patience. You are a dear group of ladies."

"Ooh, how nice," the mothers-in-law responded in unison. One said, "I've always wanted to see the mountains of New Mexico. I've heard that they are so beautiful. But I declare, can you believe that Mexican boy and his daddy? I declare, that poor, unfortunate woman. We should call on her while we're in Cozumel and see if she wants an afghan. Those two sound just like my Ralph and my June's Bobby when they get together!"

Well, Gentlemen of the Affliction, little did these ladies know that for the entire flight they had been proceeding north over the Canadian wilds. When they deplaned, it was in the frozen tundra of Coppermine, one of the northernmost outposts in the Great Northwestern Territories. They probably believed that the frozen knobs of ice around them were indeed the New Mexican mountains, but actually they saw part of a glacier that borders the lovely and frozen Coronation Gulf, only a two hour flight from the North Pole, and six hours from Moscow.

During their first night's stay, they were led to believe that the Aurora Borealis was the result of a great nuclear holocaust and that, by the grace of God, Albuquerque was spared, and that they were doomed to spend eternity there. Imagine how guilty they felt when they reflected on the cruelties and gross inhumanities to which they subjected their daughters' husbands over the years since, in their minds, you, their daughters and their grandchildren have gone to the great thermonuclear blast in the sky; incinerated, no less.

Meanwhile, you console your spouse and assist with all of the funeral arrangements for Dear Sweet Mom, who was supposedly devoured by the sharks (you have documentation to prove it, even an official Mexican death certificate), but you also console yourself because you know that Mom's torture is only beginning.

Not only are the ladies forced to watch reruns of *Mr. Ed, Wheel of Fortune,* and *Jeopardy* twenty four hours a day, they must also knit penis socks at the rate of at least two per week for the men of nearby Yellowknife in the Yukon Territories. Of course the ladies believe that the stockings are for the victims down in Albuquerque, for whom clothes are at a premium since the nuclear blast. Four hours a day are devoted to lectures on the virtues of men, especially the ones that their daughters married, their sons-in-law. They are also reminded daily of the selfish atrocities each of them committed while in residence with their long lost loved ones.

Mr. Ed, Pat Sajak, Vanna White, Alex Trebek and audience contestants are the ladies' entertainment forevermore except for springtime, when they are all gathered up to go on daily excursions to watch the mating rituals of the Arctic penguin and the Great Northern walrus.

Does this sound like something *you* would like? Smiling? Call S.M.I.L.E. today at 1-BAN-ISH-DMOM, and send her off on an eternal vacation. It is certain to guarantee you wedded bliss and if you want, you will be able to run around the house butt-naked, screaming profanities at the top of your lungs, you can mess up the kitchen, cook what you want, stop all of the yard work and cultivate a jungle, stop hauling off the trash and let it grow into a giant garbage heap out in the front yard ... in short, you can do what you would normally do if Dear Old Sweet Mother were nowhere around ... eaten by sharks, no less, the poor sweet soul.

■

Sestina of the Sea

Erica Sue Moore

Boats flow swiftly along the pristine shore
raising sails and greeting the coming night
waves lap against their sturdy wooden sides
dolphins leap into the crystal sky blue
diving deep in search of any sea homes
the sailors brush about the deck quiet, alone.

They all feel the void of being alone
as their vessel sails away from the shore
the sailors yearn for distant land bound home
many lay sleepless all throughout the night
to stare out into the shifting deep blue
and dream of that, ever locked in their sides.

The waves stay steady, with them, by their sides
among them a sea of many, each one alone
rolling with simple, deep, forever blue
to chance a brief visit with some far shore
and return to the sea, into the night
going back to other, far away homes.

The dolphins arise in their sea salt homes
and jump airborne, water bright on their sides
they play with the waves, long into the night
swiftly bounding over them, so alone
meeting few, quest from shore to shore
roaming through all the vastness of the blue.

Sea-blown sailors wake meet the dawning blue
the waves caress the ship, bringing them home
happy voices grow, they can see their shore
tales fly wild and laughter shakes their sides
sadness goes away, now not all alone
they dream of what's coming to them that night.

Still the waves and dolphins move by the night
to float and lull about the empty blue
roaming together, yet still quite alone
dream of having what sailors call "Homes"
where they sleep with close loved ones by their sides
and wake to walk along the sandy shore.

By the roll of the blue, along the shore
away to their homes, alone, near and far
they travel next to men's sides, day and night.

Winner of the Lillian Spencer Award for the Best Prose Work in Calliope

#14 Abercorn

Bill Gebhart

The old woman shivered and pulled her coat more tightly around her. The heater on the bus was not working this morning and the weather was as cold and wet and raw as only a rainy winter day in Savannah can be.

The old man had told her not to go, to wait until next week or the week after or the week after that when the weather would be warmer or less windy or at least not raining. The old man had told her to wait for a sunny day. What difference could a day or two make? And then had rolled over under the covers and gone back to sleep.

What difference? Of course, she had to go. Today was Bobby's birthday. Her son. Her only child. Of course she had to go. Stupid old man. What did he know. Ever since his retirement he had been no use to her at all. Not that he'd been much good before that but at least he hadn't been under foot and in her way all day long. At least he'd been gone then from early in the morning till suppertime six days a week and she could get her housework done and still have some quiet time to herself.

As it was now and had been for the last four years, she had looked forward to any excuse to get out of the house and away from him. This was an excursion she had been looking forward to for a very long time.

The old woman had planned everything so carefully. For months she had fretted over what present to get and then a few weeks ago it had come to her. Cake wouldn't do. Or clothes. Or even money. Her meager social security check would not stretch far enough to do him justice anyway and it was useless to ask the old man. He thought this birthday present business was a lot of nonsense and had made that quite plain to her on more than one occasion.

But what could she do for her boy's fortieth birthday? It had to be something very special. Turning forty was something of a milestone for any young man and she was not about to let her own son's fortieth birthday pass unnoticed. But what to do? It had to be something to remember. Something out of the ordinary. Something special.

And then it had come to her. Almost from out of the blue it had been so long ago. Of course. She would do for his fortieth birthday just what she had done for his birthdays when he was a little boy. She would make him a beautiful bouquet of handmade flowers. Bright yellows and pinks and purples and blues. It had been a private joke between them. That no flowers bloomed all winter long except on his birthday.

It was a wonderful idea. He would be so surprised. She would make a huge, beautiful bouquet and bring it to him. As a surprise. What a great birthday present it would be. She hadn't done that in years.

In fact, the last time she'd done anything of the sort, it hadn't been for his birthday at all. It had been for his high school graduation and Bobby had been so tickled. She remembered the big kiss and hug she'd received in front of all of Bobby's classmates. She could only imagine how envious all the other mothers must have been.

And that evening after all the excitement had died down, she and Bobby had sat up and talked to one another for the longest time while the old man dozed off in his chair in front of the television as he always did.

They talked for hours and hours, well into the morning. They talked about the past. They talked about the present. They talked about the future. About a beautiful healthy baby boy and his beautiful young mother and how people were always stopping to admire them whenever they passed by. About the young school boy and his devoted mother who attended every play, every game, every function he was a part of. About the brilliant science student and the mother who adored him. About the West Point applicant and patient mother who had to tell him every day there was no news and in the same breath tell him how sure she was the acceptance letter would come tomorrow.

But it never did. That summer now seemed so long ago. Almost like a vague dream. They both waited but no letter came. He worked at one of the shoestores on Broughton Street and every day she would ride into town on the #14 Abercorn to bring him his lunch and to spend a few minutes with him. Every evening he would return home to the news that there was no letter as yet and then they would cheer each other up and go into supper.

This went on all that summer until the day after Labor Day when he came home for supper and in the middle of the meal announced to her and the old man (who was barely listening she was sure) that he had joined the army. She felt as though she was paralyzed as she sat listening to him. She felt rather than heard him say that it was obvious that West Point did not consider him ready as yet but he was not going to let that stop him. He had decided to go on active duty, get a commission from Officer Candidate School and apply to West Point from that direction. He'd been thinking about it for a long time and he knew he could do it. He'd gone to a recruiter the week before and had returned that very day to sign the papers. He would be leaving on the bus the following Sunday for Fort Polk, Louisiana, for basic and advanced infantry training.

She couldn't move. She couldn't speak. She couldn't even swallow. She just sat there and watched as the old man stood up and extended his hand to their son. Then Bobby rose and embraced his father. She could have shot the foolish old good-for-nothing. Her son was leaving her and the old man couldn't or wouldn't do anything about it. And in the end there was nothing for her to do either except stand tearfully by and watch the big, dirty Trailways bus disappear down the old Augusta Road.

The old woman got off the #14 at Abercorn and Broughton, her coat and scarf her only protection against the sharp wind blowing down Abercorn Street from the river. With her old shoulder bag on one arm and an oversized shopping bag on the other, she waited for the light to change and began to trudge head down into the wind up Abercorn to Bay Street.

So many empty storefronts these days. She could remember the hustle and bustle of so many shoppers and businessmen and secretaries and clerks in days gone by. She passed Jimmy's Barber Shop where Bobby had gotten his first haircut and then so many more. One every two weeks for almost twenty years. Bay and Abercorn where the family had watched the St. Patrick's Day parade grow into the drunken orgies they were today. Garrett Cleaners, where Bobby's navy blue First Holy Communion suit had been so carefully tailored, cleaned and neatly pressed. Across Bay Street at Price and into Emmett Park. Up the still new walkway to the large marble slab of the monument to the dead of the Vietnam War. And there in the polished surface she could see both her old wrinkled face and the clearly etched letters:

ROBERT E. ANDERSON III.

She smiled to see that she had aged so much and that he had not changed at all in all these years. She reached into the basket and pulled out the large bouquet of papier-maché flowers and saw that the bright colors would stand out quite well against the gray drabness of Emmett Park in the middle of winter.

The rain was still falling but not as hard as before and the wind was still blowing but not as miserably as before. The old woman saw the rain and wind working on the small pool around the monument. No flag today because of the bad weather.

And then, as was her custom, she fished out an old, badly-creased plastic pouch from her bag, opened it and took out two yellowed pieces of paper. She unfolded them and silently read both. The first was a telegram from the army informing her of Bobby's death in a helicopter explosion in the South China Sea. Missing and presumed dead. The other was a letter from the Commandant of the United States Military Academy at West Point which stated that Robert E. Anderson, III, had been accepted and which through some strange and forever unexplainable set of circumstances had been lost only to arrive in the daily mail minutes after that once in a lifetime telegram announcing his death and six months to the day of his dinner-time announcement.

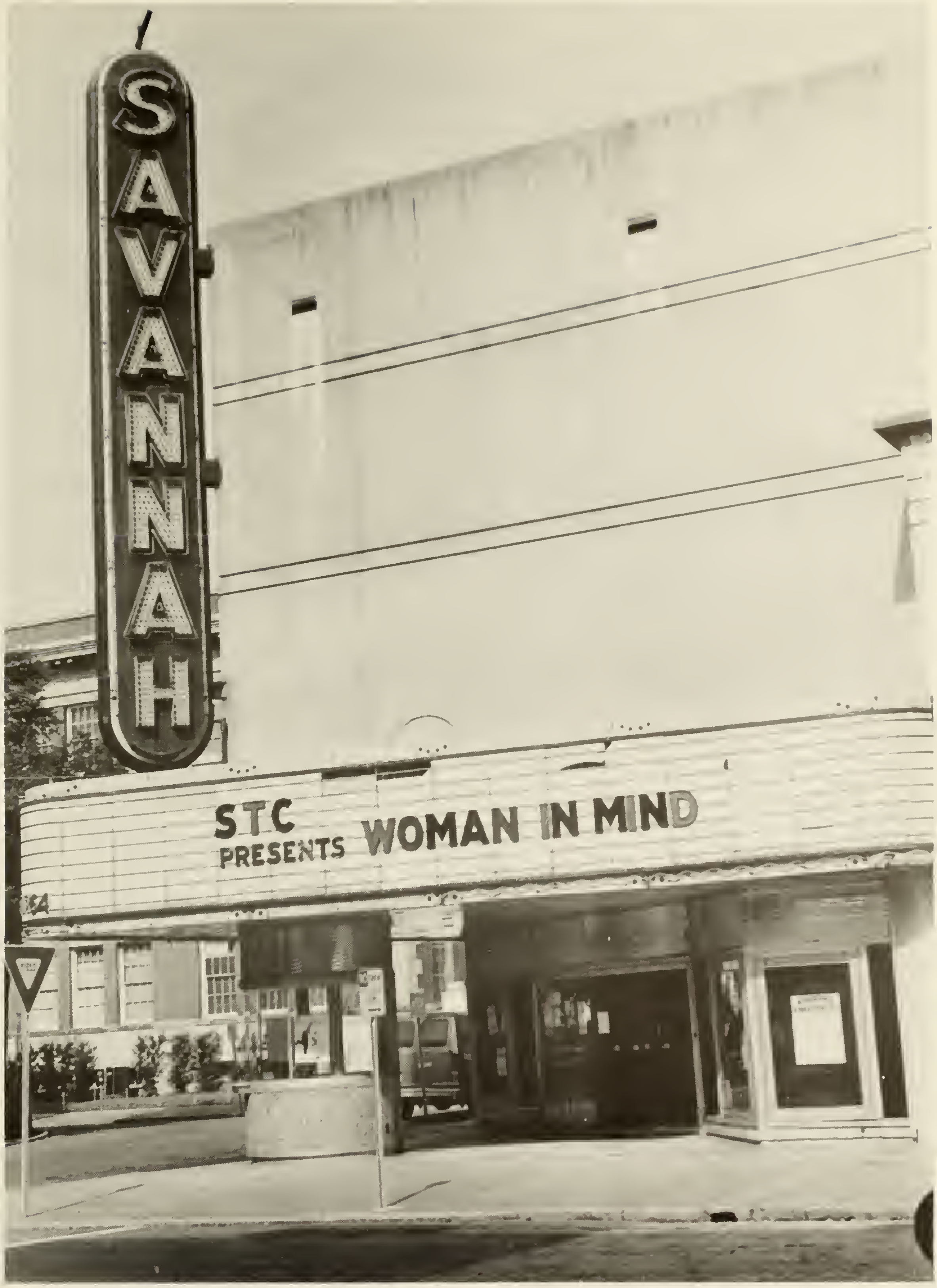
She read them both slowly and then refolded them and placed them back in their protective plastic cover. Then she put the cover into the shoulder bag and the shoulder bag into the shopping basket. And for the first time that morning she spoke out loud as she turned to go:

"Maybe I'll stop at Gottlieb's for some fresh bread and doughnuts."

Then out of the park and across Bay to Abercorn and down to the bus stop on Broughton Street. She liked the thought of going to Gottlieb's later on. She liked coming downtown. She liked going back home. She liked to do the things they had done together. Once a thoughtless friend had said to the old man within her hearing that it was such a shame that the boy's body could not have been found, that at least there could have been a burial, a ceremony, a gravesite to remember him by. How silly, the old woman thought. She had this whole town to remember him by. She even looked forward to riding on the bus no matter how dreadful the weather. The last time she had seen her baby boy he had been waving to her from the window of a bus.

Now she was returning home to the old man and the memories. It was true there wasn't much conversation to be had there. But it was better than being all alone.

■


SAVANNAH
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PRESENTS
WOMAN IN MIND

Savannah Lady
Rhonda Wingate

Calliope

Calliope

1993

Staff

Co-Editors: *Christina Van Dyke & Dianne Daniels*

Faculty Advisor: *Dr. James M. Smith, Jr.*

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Lillian Spencer Awards:
Best Prose piece: "Blushing Gray," *Emily Heverin*
Best Poem: "Souls in A.M.," *Wes Daniel*
Best Artwork: Untitled, *Jacquelynn B. Nessmith*

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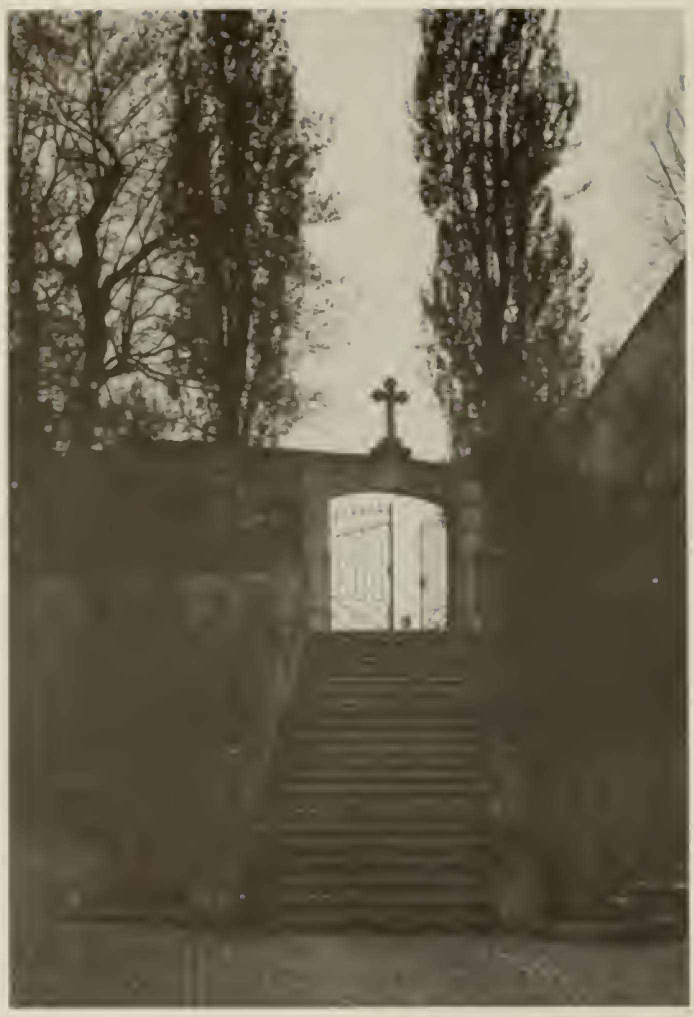

Gateway
color photograph
Dianne Daniels

The Wild Geese

We often heard them before the first light
And then we could see them, barely discern them
in arrow flight.
They would pass overhead in a raucous clamor
With voices like great creaking hinges,
And then they were gone, before the first light,
And our hearts would follow the echoes of their passing.
Did they define their flight, or did it define them?
And what were our lives of time and money
compared to theirs?
They fought the winds, the numbing distance, the long reach
of hunters' guns,
Yet I found no grief in their lusty cries,
But only a deep longing for a sense of arrival
At a treasured place that fills them like a truth.

All life is struggle,
And I for one would not deny theirs, certain as I am
That they have enlarged the soul of life
With their mythic flight of life's journey.
They leave us standing with tools in hand,
Our winter breath above our heads
While theirs trails quickly behind them
Before being blown to nothing by the wind.
And the questions they leave us, are the questions
of our own existence:
Where do we come from,
And where do we go?

- Jim Buttimer

Fear of Flying

Engines are fueled getting ready to go.
My feet must stay planted firmly below.
I'm waiting for take-off, holding my breath.
I wave and sigh. I watch the plane leaving.
It's your first flight and it's something I know—
New wings can carry you to lands with more.

With take-off I reach for the air and more.
I should not be afraid to let you go
But see there is something I fear I know—
The Earth looks different when looking below.
With altitude your senses start leaving.
It's hard from heaven to gather your breath.

As if I could turn you around with my breath
I cry to you there exists so much more!
Things to do that we can't if you're leaving!
Your damn career! I don't want you to go!
Though distance brings a blurry sight below
I must try to hold on to us I know.

The horizon's no limit now I know,
But altitude is stealing my last breath.
Every cloud that you pass gets pushed below
Darkening my will to live anymore.
I hold on tight though I'm letting you go.
You can test your wings—I won't be leaving.

Once I flew high with you, now you're leaving
Me to hover over things I don't know
How to get control of and still you go.
Elevation drops, now I'm out of breath,
And once I hit the ground I know there's more,
As I stand close to you from here below.

Perhaps one day your dreams will fly below
The clouds to take my heart before leaving
Again. But for now you feel you need more.
Still deep inside I hope you'll always know,
When pressure from the climbing takes your breath,
In me you'll always find a place to go.

Below I fear the flight, but this I know—
You're leaving. I must try and catch my breath.
I love you, so more I must give you . . . Go!

- Michelle Collins

Ensenada Fishermen

Eternal golden path,
stretching into the green sea,
Horizonward, beyond, beyond.
Dotted upon the living ocean are men,
boats of brown wood rotted and worm-
ridden, grey canvas sails dipping,
heaving to–fro over the swells.
The day is long yet ever closer
night, Mother Superior,
the beaches await pearly, white,
and the time for stowing and mending
close, now, close.
Nestled quiet in the brown hills
their town, their father's land,
lies waiting their return,
closer, ever closer, the
smell of pintos refried well,
iron skillets over hearths roasting
tortillas, and the drink of the men,
the life of the men, their women await the
coming, together at the beach,
hushed voices saying, it is close now,
close.

- Robert Ashby

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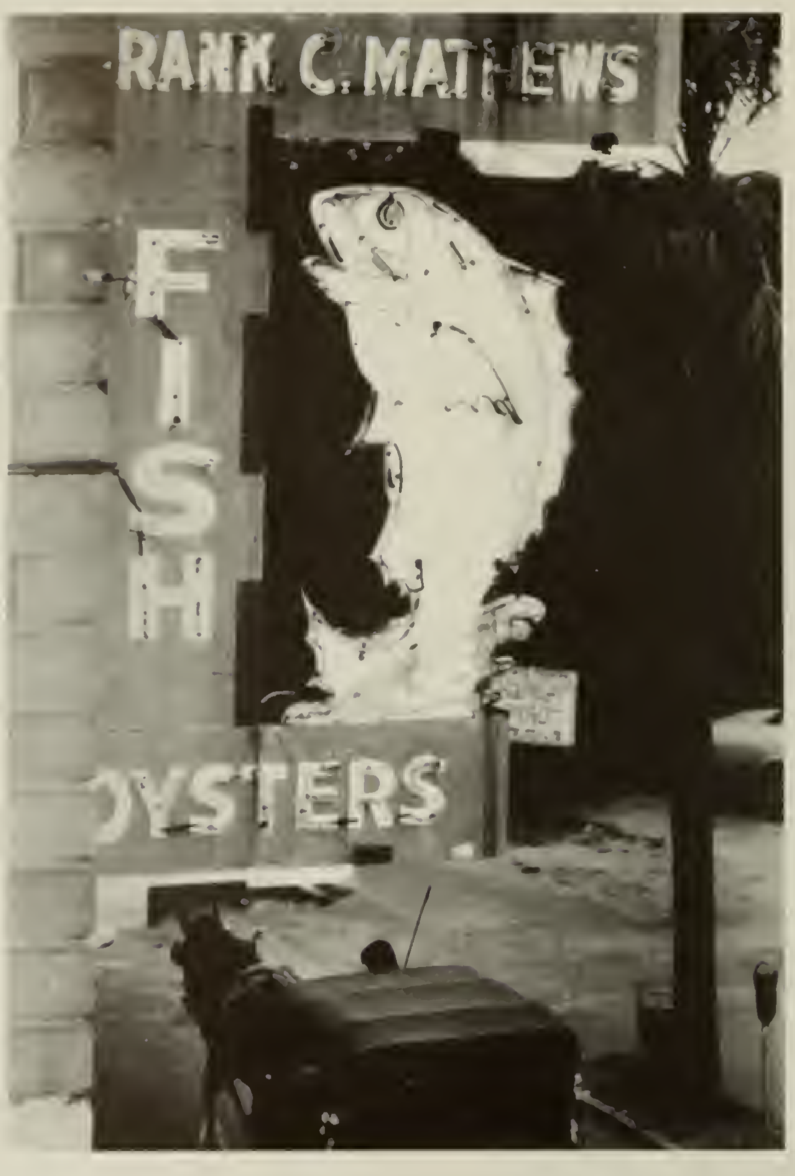
gelatin silver print
Stephen Leavins


RANK C. MATHEWS
FISH
YSTERS

Rank Oysters
gelatin silver print
B.J. English

Blushing Gray

Oh Lord. His handprints still warm on her back, she padded down the plushly carpeted hallway. Next to the ice machine and a full-length mirror were the elevators. She pressed the downward arrow, and looked at herself, devilishly. Her face, devoid of the usual red lipstick, looked pale and smudged by the grand thumb of whirlwind passion. Her hair was O.K.—fashionably mussed, and her jewelry (she felt for the outline of both earrings to be sure) had been perfunctorily shoved into her pocket last night as she was getting dressed. Although she never could step away from her bathroom mirror until all detectable flaws were artfully disguised, now she thought herself beautiful. Ravishing, almost. She had a sparkle, a sheen to her—that glow she hadn't in such a long time (could it have been a whole year?) —along with a strange grin she couldn't suppress. DING! The car had arrived. She flashed her eyebrows at herself, glanced in the direction of Room 701 (Why?), and stepped into the green marbled elevator.

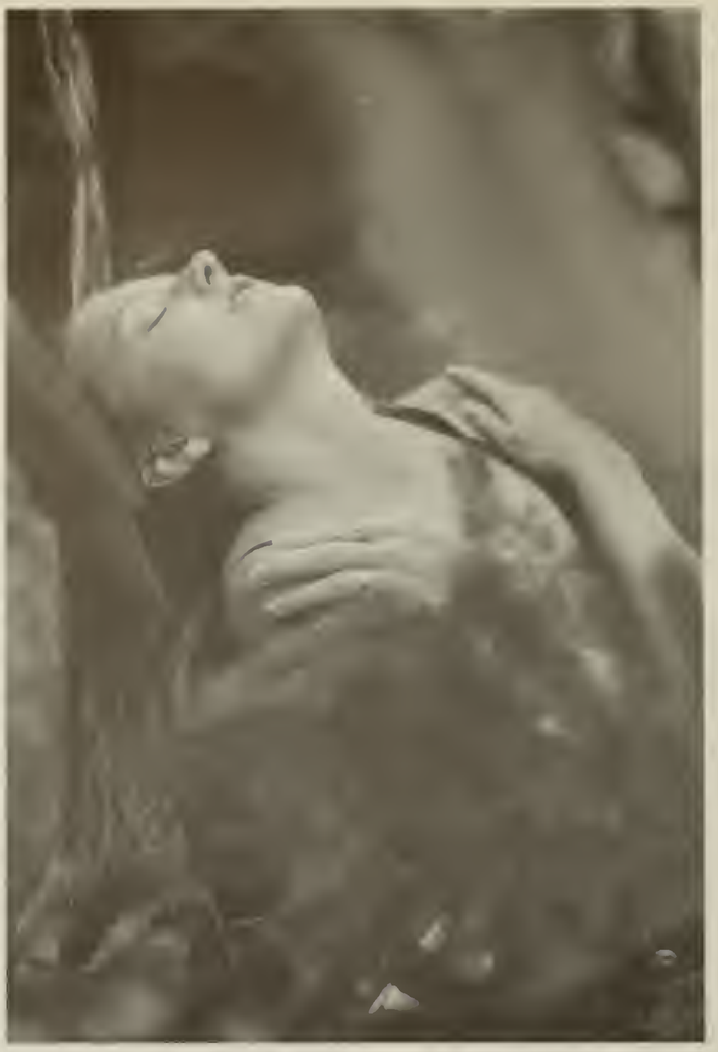
Before she could finish organizing her thoughts and replay last night from the beginning, the car stopped. She looked up at the floor indicator—lobby already? But it was blinking "5" and the doors were slowly opening. Jesus, she thought, who the hell else is up at 7:00 on a Sunday morning? Could he have run down the stairs—her thought was interrupted by two teenage boys, wearing new jeans and bright shirts who laughed their way onto the car, dragging huge vinyl bags after them. They looked quickly at her from under their eyelids, and the taller one continued with the story that apparently was making them laugh so hard before the elevator came. "So anyway, the bartender's like, can I see some I.D.? So I go, look buddy, my father OWNS this place. . . ." She rolled her eyes and clutched her jacket closer to her stomach as she tuned them out and concentrated on the piped-in music. Boys, she thought, mere children. What had he played for her last night on his tape player? It was Brazilian, or something. . . . Just then the car slowed to a halt again—"3" this time. The silent spread of the doors showed two women staring directly into the car with no expression on their colorless faces. They stepped on board, revealing their names and the church they belonged to, thanks to stick-on nametags peeling away from the cardigan sweaters buttoned only at the top. The boys took a break from their riveting story, and there was a moment of silence as both Maureen and Mary Margaret ignored them and turned to glower at her, the tramp in the corner with the bloodshot eyes. Your minds would explode if you knew, dearies, she thought. They really would.

> Your minds would explode if you knew, dearies, she thought. They really would.

Finally, the car softly landed and the number "1" was flashing. While the women of the cloth tried to remember in which banquet room Brother Thomas was hanging streamers and pouring orange juice, and the two boys grappled with their luggage, she politely squeezed out of the box and began to stride. Definitely a stride—past the smiling and the knowing desk clerks, past the huge potted plants, through the piped-in strings, and onto the magic grocery-store mat that took the place of gentlemen and opened doors for her.

As she stepped into the gray mist of the groggy Sunday morning even the usually crazy traffic hadn't caught up with, she noticed the fog had dissipated a little since she had taken one last look at the fantastic view this morning. She turned her head up toward the millions of windows looking down at her, hoping to see him standing on the balcony, sadly blowing kisses and waving goodbye, but then she realized, up there, it was probably not quite clear yet.

-Emily Heverin



Woman and Water
gelatin silver print
Dana Danielson

Cat Print Body Walk

My dreams lick you,
walk lightly on the blanket up your legs
to your shoulders, leave small dented

footprints. Wrapped around themselves,
lying on your chest, they knead you,
revving their low engines.

- Ruth Siedenburg

A Rose Is Still Simply a Rose

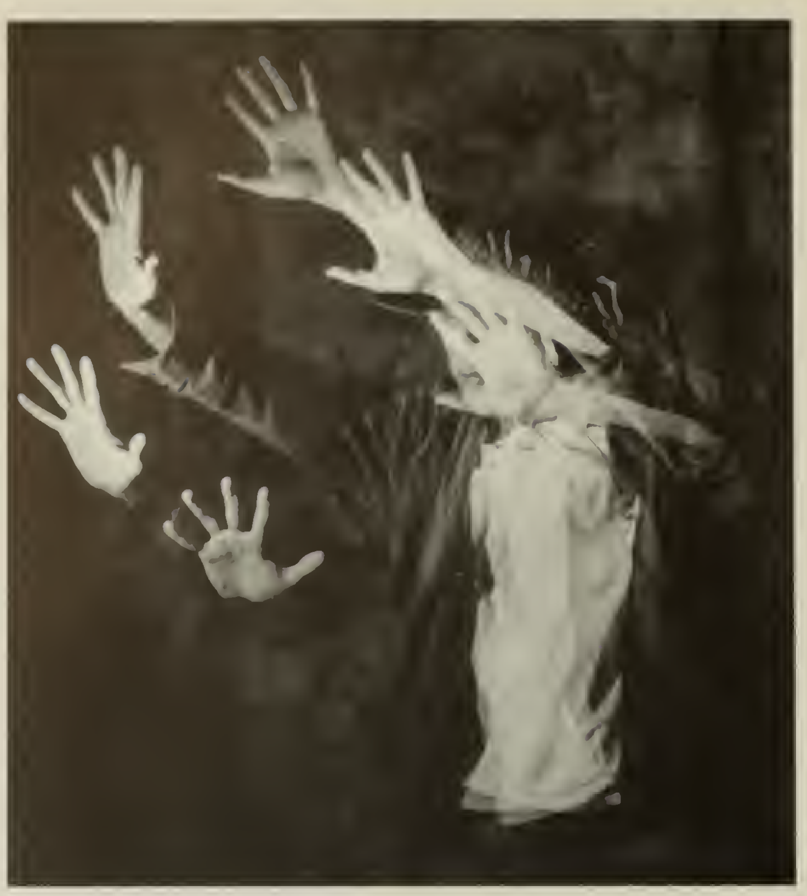
Do not give me a mere flower today.
It's better not to send bouquets to me
For they take the place of things you should say,
With mute wishes for forced tranquility.
Red roses prove your undying passion,
A daisy to beget me needed cheer—
A small array of wildflowers mentions
You've sown your oats and wish to come back here.
But flowers wilt and once more you won't come.
You seem to keep forgetting roses bite
And bright arrays of ineptness are dumb.
I'm growing tired of this lover's plight.
Take all of this madness to heart, my dear.
A Rose is still simply a rose, I fear.

- Michelle Collins

Making It Last

God what CHURCH think of church
Sitting in the back trying not to fall asleep
All the other kids trying not to be too loud
And Cheryl who always wore those stockings with the
Damn Damn SCHOOL sittin' in those desks that were too small
Smelling chalk dust sitting behind Lisa playing with her
Hair No watching Ms. Dixon write on the board her sweater
Pulling tight DAMN DAMN DAMN God DEATH think of death not
Seeing not breathing not feellling just nothing or
Paradise!! Shit

- David Floyd



untitled
gelatin silver print
Andrew H. Lentini

The Boundaries of Awareness

I, sleeping, saw a great waterfall
that $hone N many colors
of bl ue andRedand goLd
Which drENched the HUGE
Tree witH A NEW LIFE
aND i waz the Waterf
al
l And the Tree
and the herO And thebIrds and I wuZ every

tHing
FREE
atonce inThE Valley
,for that is eXactlywhere
i waz and Wanted tobe
until that shrill logic
took my mind wholly back
to its learned place.

- Garry W. McKee II

Musing

There are charcoal nights,
when my heart
Takes a brooding turn
and unwept tears
lay taint upon my every deed,
That I wonder
where is my cheery hearth
and pots wanting to be stirred?
Where is my love
to make me smile and cry
and to weep and laugh
on account of me?
Where are my babies
golden and brown,
eyes full of wonder,
begging me for tales?
Near or Far?
Close or Not at all?
I drink in the lonely night.
It pours freely from my pen.

- Christi Manly

Souls in A.M.

The dial moves slowly back and forth,
caught between my thumb and middle finger,
running over fast Spanish monologue . . .
dialogue,
further into Jesus "dammin' yo' soul fa' leavin' da' grace uh . .
"God bless A . . ."
". . . merica's most widely used sleeping pill"
". . . AT ZERO HOUR . . . ,"
working the throat of static,
manic squeals,
and low whirls of sound
caught between the air of red tower lights
and my small bedroom
burning with noise.

- Wes Daniel

Small,
silvery,
slick and smooth to the touch;
a missionary of
death

once that
hard,
cold,
hammer
strikes my end.

In a rage resulting
in roaring fire
(for only a spl-
it second),
I pierce

the air
like nothing else,
determined upon
my target
X.

Once
there,
I've
made
their
miserable
little
lives
flash
before
their
very eyes; and then they feel me, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha . . .

-*Garry W. McKee II*

Bereft
gelatin silver print
Dana Danielson

The Old Verities and Truths:

Hope in the *Heart of Darkness*

In his 1950 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, William Faulkner asserts that "a [writer's] voice need not merely be the record of man; it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail." In order to accomplish this "duty" as Faulkner saw it, a writer is obliged to remind humanity of "the old verities and truths of the heart . . . love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice," through works which illustrate the struggle of "the human heart in conflict with itself. Until he does so . . . he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man" (294-295). Joseph Conrad's gloomy account of imperialism and the search for inner virtue and moral truth in Heart of Darkness seem not to satisfy Faulkner's criteria for good literature, superficially; yet upon closer examination, one finds that regardless of his reputed pessimism, Conrad suggests that humanity is not necessarily doomed. Through Marlow's experience, the use of inverse symbolism, and the ambiguities of textual meaning, Conrad attempts to jar readers out of their complacency to examine their own values and motives. Journeying into the human "heart of darkness," one finds that the capacity for goodness is counterbalanced by the capacity for evil, but acknowledging that this "darkness" of human nature exists is our only hope of controlling it.

... the capacity for goodness is counterbalanced by the capacity for evil, but acknowledging that this "darkness" of human nature exists is our only hope of controlling it.

Marlow's experience itself would seem to suggest that Conrad believes there is little hope left for humanity; whereas Faulkner asserts that Conrad's obligation is to remind us of our nobler qualities, Heart of Darkness appears to do just the opposite, although it does satisfy the requirement of illustrating the human heart in conflict with itself. Marlow begins the tale idealistically enough, relating how when he "was a little chap, [he] had a passion for maps," that he would "stare at them for hours [losing himself] in the glories of exploration" (22). Yet, when he goes to sign on for the voyage to Africa, his idealistic ignorance comes into conflict with imagery that suggests impending doom. He describes the city as "a white sepulcher . . . a dead silence . . . as arid as a desert." This archetypal symbolism of hell is further reinforced in the employer's office: "a skinny finger beckoned me. . . the great man himself. . . his grip on the handle of ever so many millions" (24). The "deal table" could be understood figuratively to be a table where one signs a contract with the devil, and one of the two women who "knitted black wool feverishly" is witch-like, with a "cat reposed on her lap," and "a wart on one cheek" (25). Frederick Karl interprets these two women as "the Fates who send gladiators out to die in the jungle for the glory of the empire" (132). Amidst all this hellish imagery, however, there is an element of hope, for Karl goes on to say that "it is significant that Marlow encounters only two Fates (they could be Clotho and Lachesis, who in classical mythology spin and measure the thread of life), for the presence of a third (Atropos, who cuts the thread) would indicate his imminent death" (132).

This sense of foreboding does not escape Marlow: "I began to feel slightly uneasy . . . there was something ominous in the atmosphere. It was just as though I had been let into some conspiracy—I don't know—something not quite right" (25). Conrad clearly establishes through Marlow's perception of the situation that he is a moral man, yet the vagueness of the impression suggests that Marlow isn't willing to confront his trepidation directly. Rather than put a finger on exactly what troubles him about it, he escapes: "I was glad to get out" (25). He "accepts the status quo for whatever reason" (Karl 126), something we have all done at one time or another.

This initial scene sets up the reader for the twists that Conrad imposes on conventional symbols later in the story; the imagery previously associated with hell is now described in terms of lightness, which is our traditional imagery of heaven, virtue and moral purity. To this, Conrad adds that what is described in terms of light, or white, is corrupt, artificial, even diabolical; and that which is described in terms of darkness is actually truth. The effect of this "symbol switching" forces readers to adjust stereotypes, and we eventually begin to realize that Conrad wants us to see our labels as nothing more than our illusions of reality. We use labels to classify, rationalize and comprehend what we see and experience, and we are now in the uncomfortable position of having to re-think them. For example, it would be easy to think of the jungle in the traditional terms associated with it—the darkness—as the symbol of evil; yet Conrad makes it very clear that it represents evil as an element of truth. Marlow observes that the wilderness "had taken [Kurtz], loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation" (64). The wilderness represents a truth about the evil in Kurtz, and, as Conrad establishes throughout the novel, in all people. To succumb to this darkness is to suffer Kurtz's fate; to avoid acknowledging it renders us powerless to control it, and we become accomplices to it, as does Marlow.

Another use of this symbol-tampering occurs when Marlow encounters other white men on his journey, such as the chief accountant: "I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers" (32). This pristinely-garbed vision contrasts sharply with the "barbarians": "black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth . . . in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment and despair" (31). It is immaterial that Marlow seems impressed with the accountant, for we can't tell if Marlow is describing him sarcastically or not; but Conrad doed not intend to impress the reader with the "achievement" of imposing oneself forcibly on the natives: "When one has got to make correct entries [read "impose one's societal ideals"], one comes to hate those savages—hate them to death," the accountant postulates (33). Karl sums up Marlow's moral judgement accurately when he says that "he believes that imperialism must justify itself with good deeds," yet, when Marlow tries to apply this to the accountant, Conrad illustrates "the absurd contradictions . . . between modern beliefs and modern practice" (126).

Perhaps no one character presents the rift between belief and practice more vividly than Kurtz. The reader is aware by this time that a meeting between Kurtz and Marlow will be the climax of the story. We have seen the worst that human beings have to offer in the atrocities committed by Imperialists against the natives in the name of wealth and power, but Kurtz is the embodiment of the devil himself. What Conrad wants to remind us of, however, is that Kurtz started out as idealistically as Marlow did. While reading Kurtz's report, Marlow is enthralled with the "unbounded power of eloquence—of words—of burning noble words" that tell how the white man "[could] exert a power for good practically unbounded" (65). In this report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, Marlow has finally found the rationalization that his morality has been seeking. His illusions are abruptly shattered, however, as he reads Kurtz's last words, "the exposition of a method" to bring about this suppression, "luminous and terrifying like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: Exterminate all the brutes!" (66). As revelation after revelation of Kurtz's malevolence beats away at Marlow's ignorant idealism, he arrives at two conclusions: first, that outside the strictures of society, Kurtz allows the human capacity for evil to consume him; second and perhaps, more important, he realizes that he could just as easily have done the same thing. What redeems Kurtz in Marlow's eyes are his last words, "The horror! The horror!" (85). Whether these words are Kurtz's sincere apology for succumbing to the darkness of corruption, or the angry cries of a man thwarted by death from completely establishing his power and dominance, almost doesn't matter—Marlow needs these words to be "an expression of some sort of belief" that he acknowledges his wrongs and has repented, because Marlow is incapable of comprehending the darkness that Kurtz embraced so willingly. Michael Jones notes that "if Marlow is going to continue to live as a moral being, he

untitled
gelatin silver print
Kristi Whittal

must, once again, shelter himself from the wilderness within the limitations of order and coherence made possible by his conscious mind. It is a kind of willful self-delusion that permits him to escape Kurtz's fate" (78). Marlow cannot directly face that he, as a human being, possesses his own "heart of darkness," that such a thing exists in all people, so he rationalizes Kurtz's cry as a "moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, but abominable satisfactions"—simply, a soul in torment that repents in the end. And yet, Marlow returns to society angry with the artifice and corruption that he sees: "their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of danger it is unable to comprehend" (87). Jones muses that "all things human are lies . . . [yet] without lies, human life is impossible; the order which is essential to it could not exist. Hence Marlow, by the end of the tale, must live with the knowledge that he too has to be a liar in order to survive," and this explains Marlow's apathy (78). In order to secure his own existence, he must be the unwilling accomplice to the things in society he hates most; the alternative, as he sees it, is to follow Kurtz into the abyss.

What other choice does Marlow have, then, but to lie to the Intended? C. B. Cox writes that "it is appropriate that Marlow should lie to her . . . for her life is based on hypocrisy, like the European civilization in which she has been nurtured. Her devotion has transformed the reality of Kurtz into a false ideal, and this self-deception is a psychological necessity for her" (58). Marlow knows that it isn't his place to strip away her ideals, and has already acknowledged that it is beyond his ability to make her aware of what he now knows of human nature. "No, it is impossible. We live as we dream, alone" (82). Whatever revelations she has in the future about Kurtz must be through her own experience, and Marlow himself has already exonerated Kurtz for his crimes in his own mind.

Does this mean, then, that we are ultimately powerless to recognize and control human fallibility? Karl puts more faith in Conrad than that: "just because Marlow fails to see Kurtz as a devil . . . does not mean that his author did" (131). He further states that Conrad believed "men deceive themselves to the very end: about the evil in others and themselves" (31). Conrad uses our traditional symbols to show us that what we stereotypically label as "good" may in fact be evil, that people must face the darkness of reality. Turning one's back on that darkness doesn't make it disappear; such a response only proves to be a silent acquiescence for it to continue. Not examining truth for ourselves makes us accomplices, willingly or not, but Conrad cannot lead us to this conclusion: "The temptation for the artist, as Conrad sees it, would be to offer his readers an organizing metaphor by which they could comprehend both his values and his aesthetic forms, a heart for his awareness of darkness" (50). We as the readers are going to have to negotiate the darkness on our own, for it is ultimately our responsiblity—not Conrad's—to save ourselves. This may be what Conrad had in mind all along.

> Turning one's back on that darkness doesn't make it disappear; such a response only proves to be a silent acquiescence for it to continue.

- Susan Parker

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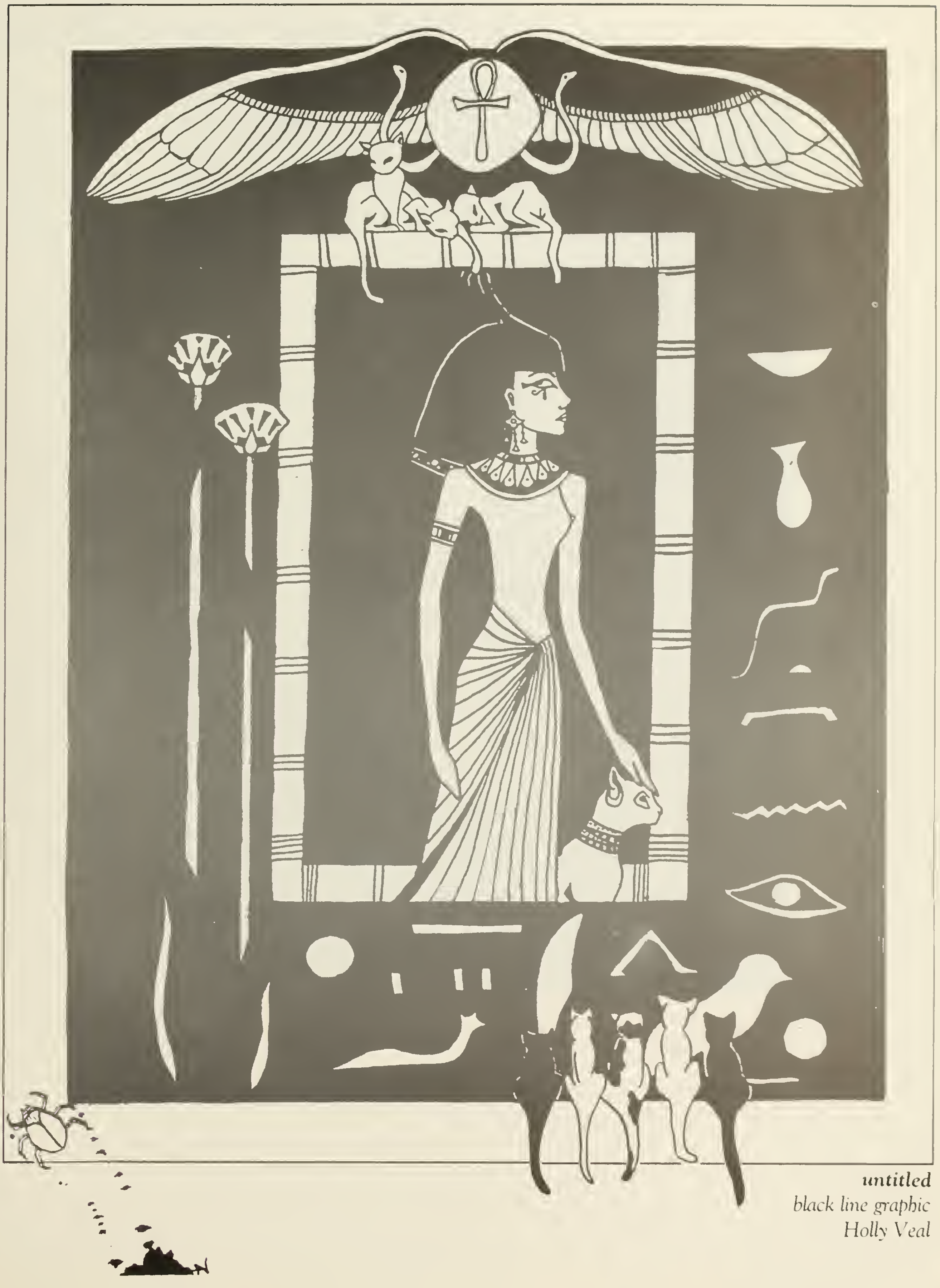

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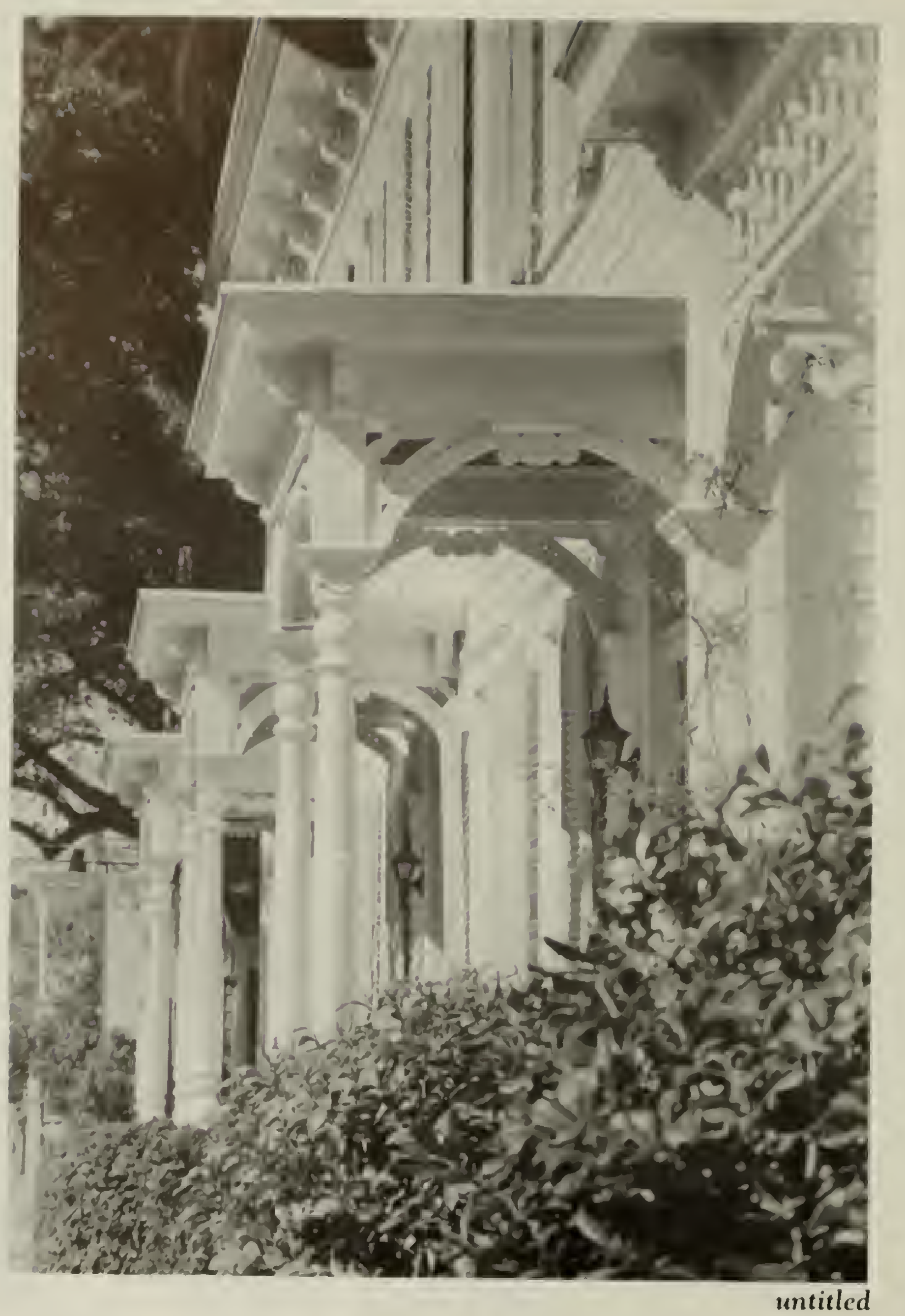
Holly Veal



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gelatin silver print
B.J. English

Early Morning Phone Call

Four a.m. and submerged in sleep,
Close by clock tapping softly,
Dreaming lightly or not at all,
His eyes rapidly twitch;
His calico slumbers at the
                                        foot
Of the bed.

Phone rings,
And he enters into a dream of
                                        childhood
Bells.
Mrs. Fletcher of second grade
Stands ominously by the room's entrance
As the bell reports the beginning of class.
Eyes open-close-open-close
                                        close.

Second ring draws him into an
Obscure reality.
Dream slowly melts away
As a cumbrous arm reaches for the snooze alarm–
Then retracts.
Again, his head becomes heavy in the pillows,
And like a ship full with sleeping passengers
Sinks quietly beneath the surface of the ocean.
His mind descends into a dark abyss,
Down
          Down.

Bell tolls again like a compelling itch
Demanding action.
Slumbery eyes open to a dim room.
The phone is ringing
       The phone is ringing
              THE PHONE IS RINGING—
At four a.m.
With a sudden merging of fear and worry,
His eyes open wide.
He wishes the unwanted intrusion had not come.
Wishes, the way one wishes a problem
Would just fix itself,
                              just go away,
Just stop ringing—no,
The phone has to be answered.
Again the ring disperses the stillness
As the roused man forms a macabre image of his
Unwell parents.
Heart attack? Seizure?
Or car crash, tearing off arms and legs,
Head crushed like a used tissue?
If I don't answer
                         no I must answer
Did someone die I don't want to know
I hate who's doing this to me I must answer
Has someone died they're old they're old.

Fifth ring.
Maybe it's work—could be work;
Come in they may say.
It may be only that.
A trembling hand reaches for the

phone.
Fingers slowly wrap around the receiver.
And after one last moment of stalling,
He raises the receiver
And reluctantly guides it to his ear—

                                        Hello?

- Dane Creamer

untitled
gelatin silver print
Cindy Wallace

Blue Willow

Standing at the kitchen sink
(Hate all other chores but this)
Buzzing man and children gone—
Warming in the windowed sun.

Gently washing, water laving,
Gleaming plates of blue and white,
Weeping leaves my eye delighting,
China shining in the light.

Will the fishers catch their fishes?
Will the boatman reach the shore?
Will the lovebirds escape her father?
Questions frozen evermore.

As the patterns rim the story,
So my life is framed in roles.
Crack or shatter's only answer—
Smash the plate to break the mold.

Cannot break my lovely dishes
(Hate to leave my sun-soaked sink)
Mind shall take me out the window—
Iconoclastic thoughts will wing.

- Katy Pace Byrd

The Bed is Made

We scale
laundry
dishes
no where warehouse piece work
homework

trying trying trying
to keep our
litterbox lives
fresh clean

upkeep upkeep upkeep
pulling the weeds
take down the trash
finish the list

So we can
find each other amidst
the rubble and grimy
frustrated tears . . . Our lives
are getting in the way.

- Susan Parker

Hardwood Floor

Neat little rows of glossy oak
soaking up the cold
from beneath
and holding it
in reserved anticipation
of bare awakening feet.
The procession begins
from bed
to bath
to kitchen.
All the while
each step
reminding us
of what outside awaits.

- Vance Hanson

untitled
gelatin silver print
Gregg Guillou

Grandfather Oak

The old oak stands in a field of loss
and measures all by what used to be.
Around him lie the fallen trunks and upturned roots
of those who had competed for water, soil and light.
He now stands alone,
and all this leaves him with the strange discomfort
        of a battle won.
And who would have thought
that the very struggle was all that mattered?
For in the struggle he defined himself
as life-giver, life-enhancer, true heart of oak.

I see him now cast in solitude,
the shoulders hunching ever nearer.
The legs falter, the hands quiver,
"What's left of me," he half-joked.
His last years were spent in yearning for the path of return.
His journey was nearly complete,
and the life that began as a clenched fist,
was now the open palm for all to see.

The ghost of struggle is all that remains,
but that does not stir him.
Only the verdant chant of Spring can rouse him now,
for it is then that the old life and the new life are one.
Beneath these limbs with their weight of years,
we sought our comfort, and he has become the rooted thought
        of strength and ease,
        shade and rest.

- Jim Buttimer

30 Common Occurrences in America

dark
stroll
door
purse
key
lock
in
turn
out
knob
push
in
shut
on
step
mask
glint
rape
open
man
step
off
pull
Later.
out?
slam
tock
tick
tock
tick

untitled
gelatin silver print
Darcy Bergman

Jessie Jones

Through the Looking Glass: *A Brief Reflection*

Looking into her own eyes, Francine saw a lifetime of solitude. Stepping away, walking into the reality of her own minimal existence, the feeling slightly diminished . . . just enough for her to realize the image was not her own. Regaining the knowledge of "then" puts "now" into a new perspective. Accosted by memories of a child, it is impossible to mentally progress . . .

a little child in a red velvet dress and little black patent leather shoes . . . The little girl runs through Francine's memory. When their eyes finally meet, the browns melt into tears of horror.

It happens whenever she self reflects.

The browns of her eyes never let deceit slip far from view. If the glass weren't so tantalizing she would be able to skip forward . . . but the image is so clear, the brown so vivid, the memory so alive that she can feel the velvet as it covered her face and suffocated her cries . . .

Rationalizing only succeeds in molesting her intelligence. She stares into the brownness and watches mental movies that pause and rewind on cue. Played over and over, the scenes are familiar to her mind's eye. Closing her eyes does not erase the intensity of emotion . . . pressing the mute button does not drown out the deafening terror. The volume of the crying gets louder and LOUDER as she desperately tries to edit the memories. The fast forwarding finds her diving into the brown glass . . .

the image shatters.

Seven years' bad luck seems more promising than a lifetime of shame and denial. She stepped through the looking glass and couldn't come back.

- Christina Van Dyke

Looking Up

Blue and brown
and some green
dark and only a little of each
Each one
Each all
Each apart
Blue brown and green
dark green
Is it brown that falls in between?
blue and green
wing and wings
dark green wings
and blue to follow
Brown and green
What do they mean?
our eyes.

- Vance Hanson

A Child Wins

A boy looks into a mirror.
He is searching for the man
he someday hopes to be.

A man searches his reflection.
He looks for shadows
of the child he never was.

Staring out of the silver-backed glass
is a dream . . .
a dream of a child
who became a man
before the man could be a child
. . . but no reflection.

The man-child lay forever silent
for the boy had searched too hard
for the man he would never become.

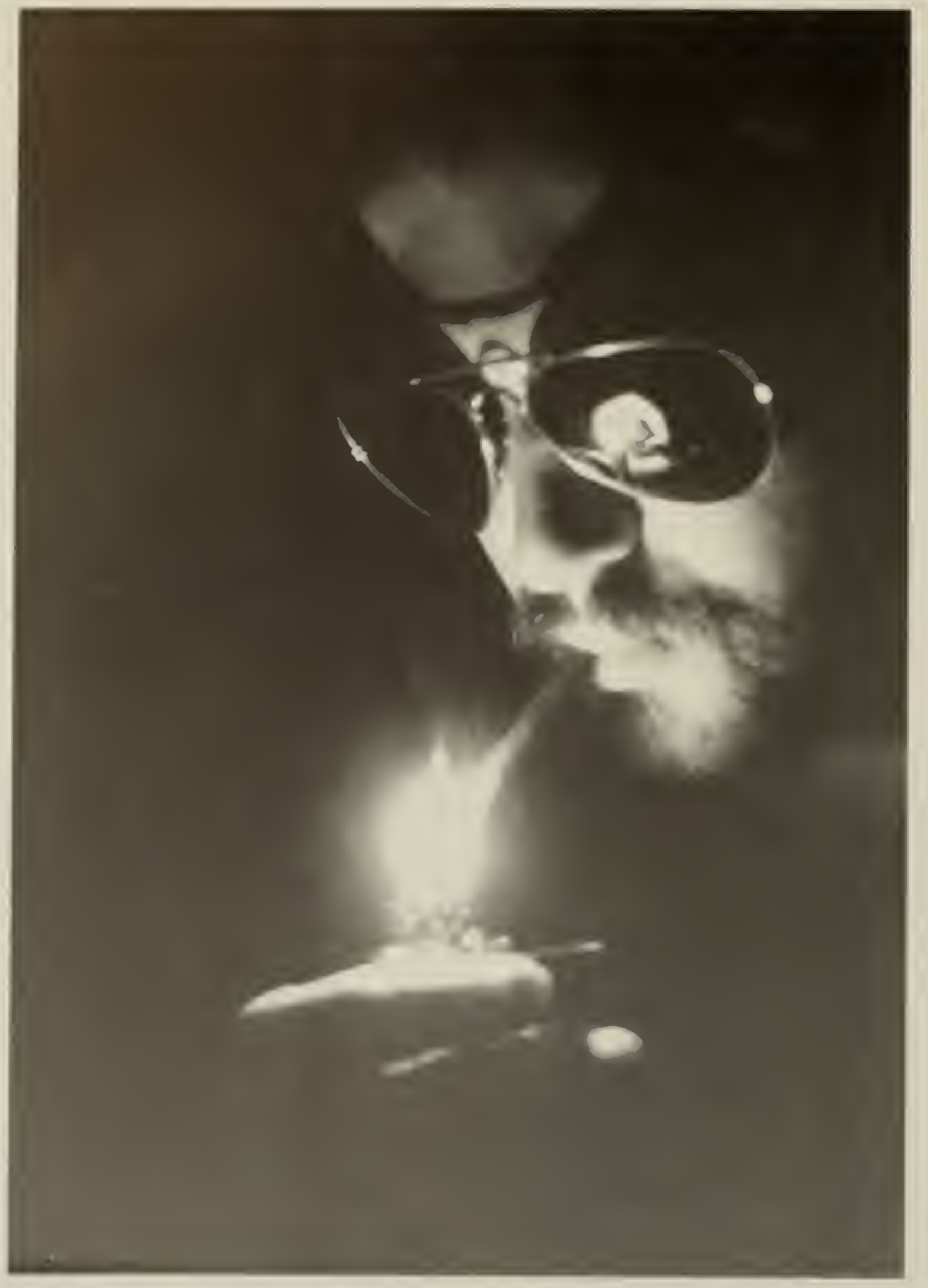
- Tiffanie L.C. Rogers

Cold War

Snowballs,
having been packed
tight by mittened hands,
are fired
like artillery,
by seasoned
playground Pattons
across Atlantic Avenue
to
    rain
        down
on the enemy, unaware
the game's begun.

- Craig Kozlowski

untitled
gelatin silver print
Cindy Wallace



Portrait of John
gelatin silver print
Dana Danielson

Menthol Love

I told her that if I could do anything in the world, I would write and draw. And I was swimming drunk.

As I put down this pen to this paper, my mind is a gumbo of kisses and tears and the things in between. Now, is this piece of paper going to serve as the silent priest on the other side of the confessional booth or the drunk soldier on the bunk above me? Because if nothing else translates, one has got to believe that if one sings one has sung. So to you, my priest and bunkmate, here is a tune I heard.

The car didn't need to be locked. I stopped to think about the fact because we were in a bigger city than I was used to.

"The car's alright?" I asked Jeff as he was going in the front door of a two story residential house.

"Yeh, and we might want to bring in the Toke-Master."

You see, this was Jeff 's friend Tom's house. We went to the stairs through the downstairs foyer and hall. It was a solidly built colonial style house that had tall shade trees in the yard around it and was only five or ten minutes away from a commercial district with imported rug shops, Japanese restaurants, and Rolls Royce dealerships. Among the furnishings in the downstairs of that house there was an elaborately framed fish eye mirror that reflected the whole foyer and living room distorted in its ten-inch-wide surface.

I shut up, though. It's an unwritten rule that one should look around and take in the situation and get a hold on the situation before asking a question about something that might be obvious.

We went down the upstairs hall and came to a room with a vaulted ceiling and a t.v. There was a sofa, two chairs, and a table, and you couldn't see much of the floor or table top for the socks and pizza boxes and the plate of marijuana. Tom came in after a minute and sat down on the sofa beside Jeff, sighed, and said, "Sorry 'bout the mess guys; it's been crazy."

Jeff said, "That's cool," and we smoked and I found out that Jeff and Tom planned on going over to a college town an hour away, where I had lived for four years, to see a band that I did not want to see. The band already had more listeners than they deserved, and I wasn't going to be one even if it really didn't matter what I did and even if that was where the majority of the sexy girls were going to be that night. So, we sat in the den with the stale pizza slices sitting in their boxes on the floor and sweet smoke filling the air. I was sitting on a chair across from Jeff and Tom and could hear them talking about Tom's girlfriend and everything, and I realized that Tom's mother who they didn't mention but had been sick with cancer was doing pretty badly or had died. And, also, I decided I'd split away from them when they went to the club where the over-hyped band was playing at and go to some bars.

On the way to that college town we listened to music by a band from the area that sang of the Statesboro blues (I looked over in the corner and Grandma she be had them too). And I smoked cigarettes in the back and accidentally burnt a hole into one of the leather seats of Tom's four-wheel- drive vehicle. Four-wheel-drive vehicles, yeh, I'm trying to evolve into a situation where I can walk everywhere, and everybody else seems to be evolving towards picking up the groceries in a Sherman tank.

That college town was cold and inviting. The kids were out for the holidays, and all the hype-seekers were in one club. My friends joined the worship of the popular—and I went looking for a place to worship the intoxicating. On the way I ran into a mutual friend of Jeff and myself named Pete. His girl was fine and sweet and they were heading to a bar that I had never been in. It was small and was decorated with ugly posters and neon beer signs on every wall. Pete, his girl, and I sat at the bar and split up a pitcher of beer into three glass mugs. The beer went down good, and I started to ignore the details and enjoy the finer points of the scene.

"So you're waiting tables and going back to school for no reason?"

"Yeh," I answered Pete. "I'm pretty sure this thing isn't any big competition."

"You're right, Les. I mean I feel like a fuck-up half the time because I'm not going to be a doctor or a lawyer. I mean I still have my fingers crossed."

"Yeh, I mean, if someone's got directions to this thing, I don't know of it. And I don't know that I'd want to be let in on them anyway. The first rule would probably be to screw over the person you would least like to screw over."

"Yeh man, I kind of envy your position." Damn, I thought, you can't agree: it means too much. "Watch out," I said. "I'm pretty sure I'm on the highway to hell."

The bar ran along the right side of the place and went down about half the length. The back half had two coin-operated pool tables that were end to end with cocktail tables around them. Down the left side there was a corridor that was partitioned off from the pool tables by a low wall made of cheap wood. Around the near pool table there was a group of five people shooting and drinking and smoking. One of the girls I had worked with on the university newspaper. We both sold advertising space, driving around from business to business. She smiled and laughed in the newspaper office when we would turn in our sales at the deadline. I would moan and whine. I wasn't a good salesman, but I made some good friends from that bunch of clients who didn't buy any space, and I enjoyed working downtown where the office was. That office was just on the other side of the block from the bar we were now in.

She was smiling and laughing like she had when I worked with her. I glanced over my shoulder at her some more, then started staring. Her and another girl were with three guys that seemed a laughing, backslapping bunch. My former co-worker, Laura was her name, and her friend got up from their table with their beers and walked by me to the door. I smiled at her and raised my beer as she passed. I saw her close up for the first time since selling ads: light brown hair, light eyebrows, clear skin, a grin, and eyes that would bat this way and that. I looked back down at my mug of beer, then glanced over my shoulder to see her short plump frame bat this way and that out the door.

I talked to Pete and his girl and drank with them. While we talked Laura and her friend came back in, poured some beer into their mugs from the pitcher they had left on their table and went out again. And I stole another smile from her on the way out. They came back in after just about ten minutes for another refill, and that time I turned toward them on my barstool as they passed me to leave.

"Where are y'all going? Are ya'll making out in your car out there?"

"No," Laura said, "Do you remember me, Les?"

"Oh yes," I replied. "And I'm sorry to butt into your personal life."

"Les," Laura said exhaling and batting her eyes up at the ceiling. "That alley-way next door sounds great. You know the one down by the ice cream shop."

"Yeh, but what are you listening to?"

"Ourselves," she said. And I had no idea she was a singer. They invited me out into the cold to listen to them harmonize in that downtown breeze-way. They sounded good filling that alley full of honey voice, Laura up high and her friend a little lower. They sang "There are stars in the southern skies/ Southward as you go." Real pretty. When they had their fill of singing we walked back to the pub and she told me she had quit the paper six months after I had. I told her it was great to see her and got my place back at the bar.

And she smiled and laughed, but she always smiled and laughed.

After a while Pete and his girlfriend got up and left, but I barely logged the fact into my brain. I was drinking, smoking, and glancing over at Laura every once in a while. She was wearing a Navy pea coat and her cheeks were rosy.

I had noticed other people besides Laura's group as the bar got more crowded. They were sitting at other tables and going in and out of the bathroom doors at the far end of the place. I wasn't paying too much attention to these activities, but then a guy started yelling in the men's room. I could make out something like "you fucking faggot," and could hear the whimpering of the person he was beating up and who wasn't putting up much of a fight. Somebody opened the bathroom door, and since the bar was long and narrow, almost everybody in the bar could see this tall lean red-haired guy squatting down to punch a smaller guy who was laying on the floor with his arms crossed in front of his head. He was crying and squirming, and there was fresh blood on his face that splattered on the white tile floor with each punch.

This recognition of the situation, every customer's head turned toward the scene, was a patch of stopped time. Then I was in the bathroom pulling the red-haired guy back with my arms wrapped around his upper arms and chest. He yelled, "He's a fucking faggot," and other things, and I was yelling "Calm the fuck down," "You don't beat people up," and "You're beating the shit out of him."

He wanted to keep beating the other guy up, and when the poundee made it out of the bathroom, the pounder turned around to pound me.

"That motherfucker came on to me. No one comes on to me."

He was two inches taller than me and his red hair was cropped short. I walked fast over to the corridor and the redhead ended up on the other side of that low partition. He was standing among the cocktail tables cocked forward at the waist towards me, but that partition made me feel safe enough to say slow and loud, "You can't just beat the shit out of people." I was kind of side stepping down the corridor away from the guy when Laura came up and explained to me that the redhead was a good guy who was home on vacation from some military hook-up and was kind of edgy.

The adrenalin buzz from that situation had my knee jerking up and down and I reckon I finished my beer and sucked down a cigarette before I left to find another bar.

It was cold and clear out and the trees that line the downtown streets had all lost their leaves. I walked around the corner and went through a pair of brass doors that led to a wide staircase that went up to a second floor pub. It was a long and narrow place also, and the stairs left you at the back end of it. The bar ran down the right side wall and there were tables and chairs at the opposite end by big windows that looked down over the street. The walls of the bar were painted dark red and the ceiling was dark green. I sat at the bar and started a cigarette and a beer.

Before I had finished my beer, I saw Laura, her singing partner, the red-haired homophobe, and two other guys come to the top of the stairs. They went down to the street end of the bar, but Laura saw me and came over. We talked through some beer and then she said that she wouldn't let me say that I didn't know what I wanted to do. "If you could do anything in the world, what would you do?" she asked smiling, "You've got to want to do something." I told her that if I could do anything in the world, I would write and draw. And I was swimming drunk. I wrote on her cocktail napkin something like:

Laura, don't leave me a scar
Don't scrape my elbows or my knees
Don't kill my poodle, but butter me bread
Snuf-a-luf bo-boof, ya-goosh.

And she smiled and laughed, but she always smiled and laughed.

Then I was leaving with her and her friends under the trees down the street, and I might have been skipping; I don't recall. The quintet and I squeezed into one of the guy's four wheel drive vehicles, and I didn't think of Sherman tanks because I had my arms around a Navy pea coat full of love.

"Do you want some sausage?" the redhead asked me as he sizzled up the pork at the stove back at the singing duo's apartment. Laura showed me the press kit for her band and said they played anything that was fun to sing and that their name was the Barflies.

I had no cigarettes, but her menthols tasted fine out on the carpeted stairwell of the apartment building. She stopped laughing and smiling on those narrow stairs, and she said, "You want to kiss me." I did, and, so, I did. We were on those stairs and then we were inside on the floor of the unlit living room. She stood up in the dark and I pulled her back down for a few more kisses. Then, she broke away from me, her bedroom door shut, and I was frustrated for the few seconds it took me to start snoring.

- Lee Nettles

untitled
gelatin silver print
Vernita Axson

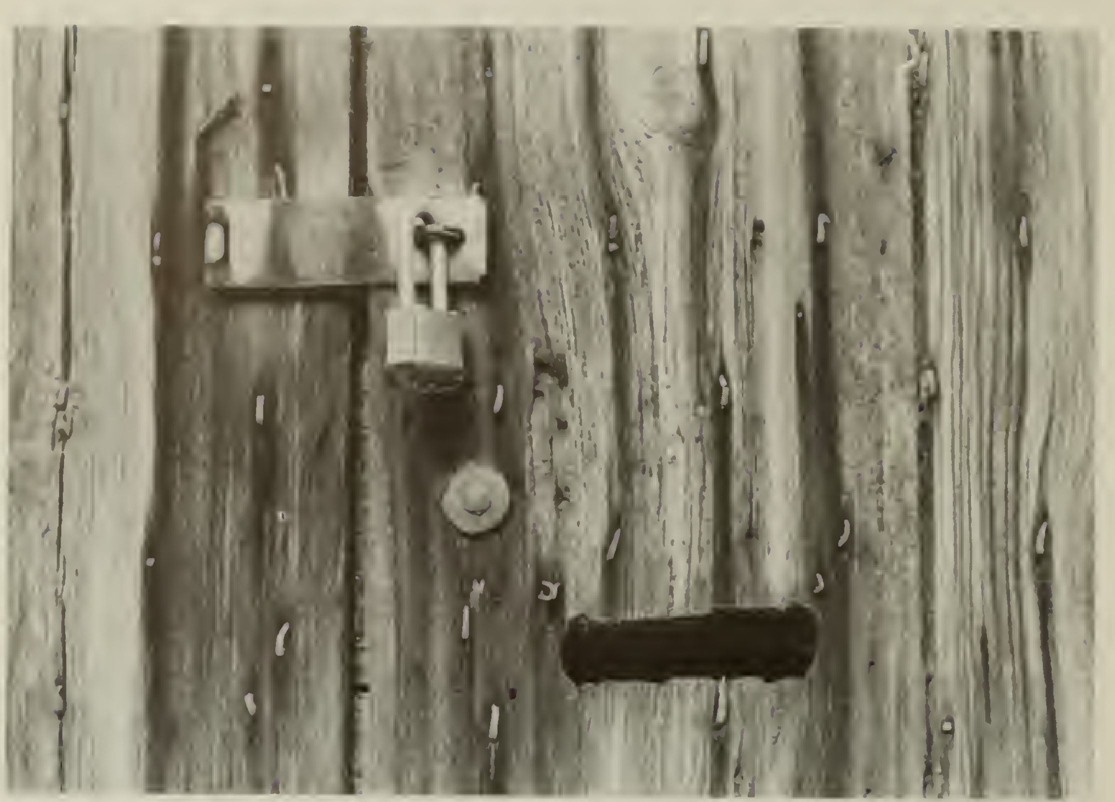
Lunch Time

That's it—open that can of
Whatever it is
YOU
Bought this time.
Twin Pet? That stuff with the plain white label?
Look at 'im. Ain't he cute in his boxer shorts,
And his Minnie Mouse tee shirt at three in the afternoon.
I'd like to see him
eat that shit
One day.
What's takin' so long?
You need a new can opener, or what?
Dog food!
It all stinks. But drat, I gotta eat somethin'.
Why not a piece of the pepperoni pizza you just
Wolfed down?

Wait! Where is he goin' now
He just set the half opened can down
And now where is he goin'?
I'll follow him.
Ouch! Step on my tail one time will ya?
Oh God, he's goin' into the bathroom.
Good. He didn't shut the door.
This means he only has to pee . . .
Behold! The flood gates are open . . .
Geez, man! Damn! Let me back away some.
Sometimes you humans are disgusting.
That's right. Zip up,
And let's get back to that can of
slop
That YOU wouldn't eat for a thousand dollars.

All right, he has it open.
Yeah, yeah—get the damn spoon from the dishrack.
What do you mean am I hungry?
Hell yeah, I'm hungry!
Just dump that can of hog testicles into my bowl,
goddammit.
Well look at that—
ain't that just appetizin'.
It looks just like the
cuisine
I retched up that day I got too hot
Waitin' in the car.
Remember that, Mister Responsibility?
I just love that smackin' sound
This garbage makes when it
plops
Into my bowl.
And I'm supposed to like this stuff.
Man, one day me and you gotta talk.

- Dane Creamer



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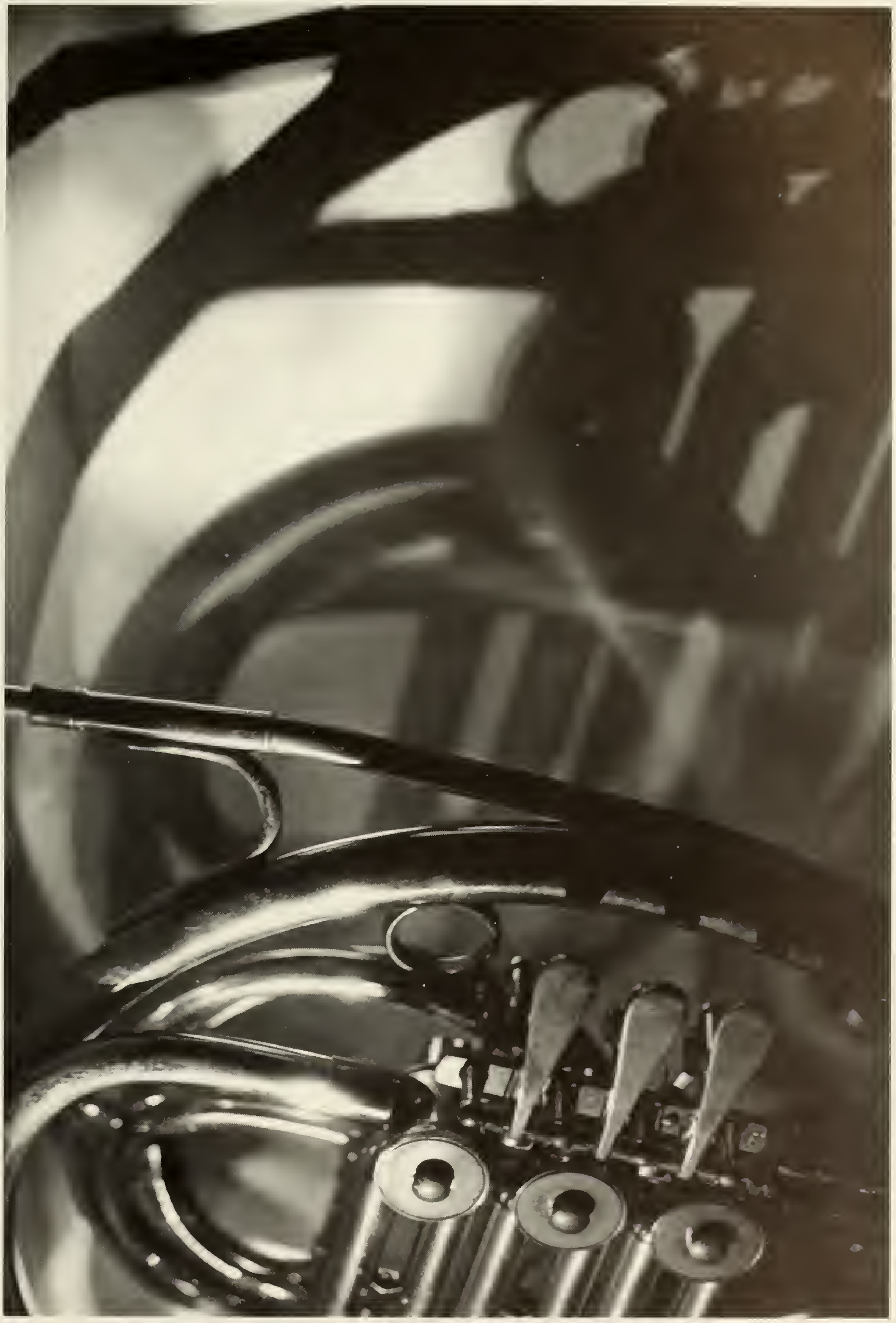
gelatin silver print
Cindy Wallace



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gelatin silver print
Joan Lebon

She could still see that picture. Grandma had it on the mantel with eight others, all out of date from staggering time periods. Some were teenaged, some toddlers, but they were all their best pictures. The most famous ones. Probably because those were the very ones Gram and Pop chose to display of their precious nine and not replace. All judgements will be final.

Anyway, Phoebe's favorite was the one of her older brother, Simon. He and her younger brother, Jacob, were named from the Bible, while her name was either from Salinger or Greek mythology. She wasn't sure, but being that she admired both sources, it didn't matter. Vague pride seemed to be a gene every one of her immediate relatives brandished on their individual helixes, along with strong noses and thick hair. A penchant for heated debates about politics or religion. Staying up until the wee hours playing pinochle or gin rummy in Grandma's smoke-filled living room with handfuls of pennies at each place. Staring out of windows. Losing touch with reality. She couldn't think of any more.

What she saw was the cheap gold-plated frame in the center of them all. The oldest grandchild. Her beautiful brother, age thirteen. Black, coarse curls, tamed by the "good brush" — a hairbrush everyone in the household shared, from her father's thinning blonde wisps to her mother's lush auburn waves, and all follicles in between. It's still around, she thought.

He wore this "western-style" denim shirt with varying blue handkerchief patterns above the breast pockets and below the long, pointed collar. He was all snapped up and contained. The shirt used to evoke fashion-righteous snickers from Phoebe, but a solemn feeling, like a priest's raised hand, would silence her.

She supposed it was the expression on his face.

Most eighth-grade kids were so self-conscious and awkward that they overcompensated from terror in front of the camera. You know that grin. Or grimace. If it wasn't the braces, it was the freshly-sprouted spattering of blackheads on their chin, or the new haircut they thought would make them look devastating. But the barber didn't quite understand "a natural flip into my eyes then a sudden twist to the left," the layers of Clearasil applied methodically every seven minutes the previous night did nothing but singe off the *good* skin cells, and Mom and Dad refused to pay for those new-fangled clear braces. I'm ready for my close-up now, Mr. de Mille. But not Simon. He had porcelain skin and perfectly straight teeth, but that wasn't it, she thought. It was more than that.

He gazed into the lens with the ease of a supermodel. His dark Italian eyes looked tired, but not without an alertness the long lashes Phoebe coveted could not conceal. His mouth, so pink and full, also conveyed a wisdom she thought startling to see in a boy so young. He wasn't smiling, but expression was surely there. She thought of her first crush, C. J. Brucklier, the class clown who had an adorable, impish grin but froze sternly in front of a camera. It irked her that all she had of him now was a black-and-white image of a kid she didn't recognize above an almost indecipherable scrawl, "To Phoebe. The greatest guy in the world is signing this yearbook and you better never forget it. C.J.B."

No, Simon wasn't posing. She knew that look, and she imagined the kids in his class did, too. It's a look given when you expect to be the first chosen for basketball teams, but you're second. Yeah, I guess he is a better dribbler. It's a look you give when you're convinced this test was aced and you finally have an A to bring home to the refrigerator of good grades museum, but you get the usual, a low B. A B-minus.

Minus.

And you hold this look on the bus ride home because you know your brother and sister have A's. Nothing but A's. It's knowing the past and seeing the future in one moment. Minus plus is nothing. Holding steady.

Phoebe knew the look on a different level, though. Her family communicated through looks. Her mother was notorious at the school where she taught for having the ability to reduce the toughest seventh-grader to tears with one of her quick glares. The meek were protected. Same thing at home. They were taught what and what not to talk about through Mom's looks. And that blue-eyed stranger, stumbling through the door after the midnight shift, chuckling to himself as he tripped on the darkened staircase, was the number one taboo subject. Shhhhhhh. Hee hee. Be quiet. Creep.

Simon and Phoebe were quite close—going to the big school together while Mom drove Jake to kindergarten. There were seven years between Simon and his sister, and she and Jake only had one year separating their births, but somehow the two oldest were closest. They had an underlying bond that no one else could connect with. Their mother adored them all, yet seemed to cater to the "baby." Phoebe's only-girl status had its privileges, such as the biggest Easter basket; and Simon, being the first-born son, could have had an almost heroic stature in some families. Not theirs.

Well, he was a sort of hero in everyone's eyes except the one who would never accept him fully. Father. He cut him down at every available opportunity. He's not even my son, he'd say. Simon was born five years before Mom and Dad met and quickly married. Her first husband, an antsy musician, left when she found she was pregnant. Of course, Simon was aware of the situation, but Phoebe and Jake were not informed until a young cousin's remark prompted tears and questions. Phoebe often wondered, if it weren't for that infamous night, when whispering together under a quilt, her cousin Jennifer blurted out,"You and Simon don't even have the same father," if her mother ever would have told them. After all, Phoebe resembled Simon much more than the fair-haired Jacob. No matter, she thought, he's my big brother whatever they say.

He was the one who taught her how to throw a perfect spiral with the orange Nerf in Delaware Park. He was the one who got in trouble every Christmas Eve for playing Frank Sinatra at midnight when he should have been sleeping, while Phoebe hid motionless under his blankets clutching a flashlight and trying not to disturb the checkers game they would continue as soon as their Mother's annual admonishing ceased. He was the one who provided her with a steady supply of stinging comebacks in case any little punks tried to get the best of her on the playground. And it was he who would huddle with her, at the top of the staircase, silent, while Mom and Dad cursed at each other, she through sobs and he through an evil sneering chortle. Simon and Phoebe were always on the same team.

And at the top of the stairs, after they had heard too much—"rotten kids," "I only have two," " I did you a goddamn favor"—when the screen door squeaked and slammed, and that sickening silence slowly enveloped the house, even seeping into Jake's room where he was playing and humming to himself, Simon would put his arm around his terrified sister who was convinced Daddy wasn't coming back this time, and he'd look at her. With that look.

Shame, relief, hope, responsibility, pity, and love, all in one look. That was her solace. She wasn't alone. Maybe he was more alone than she felt. Probably so, but they were in this together. She knew that.

This was an almost weekly ritual, followed by days of silence yet dutiful "Hi Daddy" when addressed. The routine was followed as the weeks passed and tension grew. Eventually Phoebe could hear Father yelling at Simon.

"Do you really think you'll get into a good college with grades like these?"

"I just started high school."

"Answer me!"

"I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know? Do

you think I enjoy spending money on that school to see grades like this?"

"I don't know."

"Jesus Christ! Look at me when I'm talking to you. Jesus, Simon. 'I don't know.' What the hell goes on in your head? Do you act this dumb in school? No wonder you get goddamn grades like these! You might as well drop out of school now! Do you really think you'll ever get into college with grades like these? Look at me!"

And so it went. Eventually Mother would stop grading papers or putting clothes in the washing machine in the basement and relieve her son by sending him upstairs and then attacking her husband.

"Do you know what you're doing to him? To this family?"

"Lemme alone."

And Simon would trudge upstairs to where Phoebe would be in his room, playing his records and pretending to be engrossed in her homework.

She took bites between glares at this stranger sitting next to her at her dinner table. This stranger who made her brother smile and ask his mother if he could help wash the dishes.

"Get out, Phoebe."

"Come on. I'm just sitting here. You want me to go on the floor? You want the desk? Here, I'll move my books and you can sit here and I'll just—"

"Phoebe, get out!"

So she'd slam her history book closed, and shove her notebook and workbooks and pencils into her purple bookbag, and, tears burning her eyes, stomp out of his room, down the hallway, past Jacob's closed door, past the staircase leading to her seething mother saying, "You sonuvabitch. He's fifteen years old, for Christ's sake. Fifteen years old! What do you want from him?" past all that, into her delicate room, with the door that stuck and made a fantastic noise when slammed, like an axe into a tree, where she would slap the light switch on and sling her bookbag on the light blue carpet and herself on the pink chenille bedspread, where she would slowly dissolve into gulps and sobs and gasps and finally, mercifully, sleep.

And so it went. A scene, a stomp, sleep, then silence. She began spending more time in her room, concentrating on homework and books rather than whatever might be going on in the kitchen—whoever was yelling at whom. Sometimes, if she happened to be in Simon's room and he ordered her out, Dad would come out of nowhere to defend her and start something with him. Resentment was palpable, no matter how much she tried to dispel it.

"Simon? You want to go outside and toss the ball?" she'd say after one such argument.

"No. Go away. I'm busy."

"C'mon, Simon. It's still light out. I wanna show you this new way I have of throwing it, I can almost hit the street li—"

"Phoebe, I said I'm busy. Are you deaf? Leave me ALONE!"

So she left him alone. But he didn't stay alone. One day he brought home a girl to eat dinner with them. A petite, polite blonde girl who giggled a lot and had perfectly manicured long fingernails. Her name was Beth, and Simon met her at the store where they both worked. She sat at the table between Simon and Phoebe, with her napkin on her lap and nervously complimented Mom's cooking, asked for the recipe, and asked Jacob and Phoebe about school—the same one she attended "a lot of years ago." And while she and Jacob laughed about old Miss Mazzarini and how melodramatic she got whenever she had a cold, ("Oben your boogs to pade wud-sebbeddy-sigs") and Mom beamed at Simon as she passed him the salad, Phoebe slumped over her plate and ate her spaghetti slowly, answering Beth's inquiries with monosyllabic grunts. She took bites between glares at this stranger sitting next to her at her dinner table. This stranger who made her brother smile and ask his mother if he could help wash the dishes. Nonplussed, Phoebe could only arrive at one conclusion. This was not good.

Her premise proved true as she saw more of Beth and less of Simon. Jealousy mounted, and despite burning-faced attempts to conceal it as she overheard him cooing on the phone behind his closed door, it began to present itself. She would mock Beth's prudish, frilly demeanor, how she told Simon who later told Phoebe that "your little sister is such a doll. I'd love to take her shopping or something." She would cackle about the time they attempted to teach her to play football and Beth, oh so typically, threw like a girl. She would ask Simon, well aware of the date he had, to spend time with her, then whine when he turned her down. "You AL-WAYS go out with BEEEEETTTHHH. Can't you stay home for a change?" And he'd silence her with his look. The look he used to comfort her with was now of new meaning. Why the hell would I want to stay here?, it seemed to say, but Phoebe also sensed that he wanted her to come with him. Can't you like her? Why can't you like her? She sensed these pleas as he left her in a cloud of Aqua Velva, left to wait for whomever came home first, Simon or Father. Sometimes, if Simon came home first, she'd hear his music go on and his door close, and she knew he was safe. But if Dad came home first, and Mom was asleep, he'd come into Phoebe's room, where her light was showing under the door. He'd knock lightly, pop open the door, and walk in, "Hey, sweetheart."

"Hi, Daddy." One assessing look usually confirmed her suspicion of that stale, pungent odor that wafted in after him and seemed to settle in front of her, and what it was that seemed to oil his joints and ease his smile.

They were now in separate corners.

"Wh-wh-where's your brother?"

"He's in bed," she'd answer stoically and look down at her book hoping he'd leave.

"Not him. I mean . . . I mean where's you-y-y-your other brother, heehee, otherbrother otherbrother? Hee hee. Whatsamatter, sweetheart? Otherbrother hee hee!" He'd be laughing and trying to make her laugh along with him, she supposed, but she wanted to cry. Or throw up. Or run.

"I don't know. He's out with Beth."

"Whatsamatter, sweetheart? No. I mean where's Simon?," methodically speaking, enunciating each syllable as in an attempt to hide his current state. Establish.

"Daddy, I told you he's out. I'm going to sleep now."

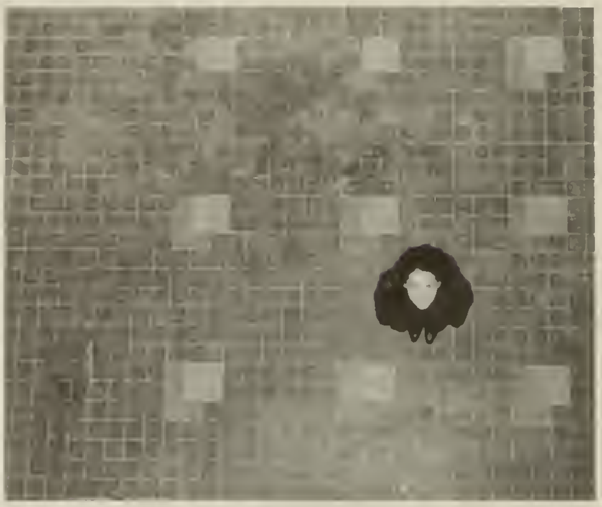
"O-o-okay, baby. Sweet dreams, honey." And he'd close the door. But she could still hear when Simon came home and the fighting would begin, he was out too late, or didn't clean the garage, or something. It was always something.

They were now in separate corners.

One Friday, she attacked out of desperation. Wanting to save him these late-night confrontations, wanting him with her when Father came home, to console her after one look into the icy, unfocused blue eyes that seemed to laugh at her. She couldn't ignore reality by herself. Collective pain was a comfort. So she stopped him on his way out of the bathroom, his face pink and shiny from a fresh shave and told him flatly, "Simon, you can do better than that. Than her. She's not good enough for you. She's a phony and she won't make you happy I mean she can't make you happy because she's a fake and all she cares about is hairspray and pink and not breaking her long stupid fingernails and—" her voice cracking and almost hysterical by this time, she looked at his face, with his eyes glowing with what seemed to her a mixture of shock and loathing, and she burst into tears. Oh Simon, I don't mean to hurt you, she thought. I just need you. Don't you need me anymore? And she received her reply as he shoved her out of his way, and stalked down the hallway, and as he got to his room and turned to close the door, he glowered at the sobbing girl, looked straight into her eyes, streaming rivulets of embarrassment and fear over her burning cheeks, and pointedly, through clenched teeth, seethed, "You little bitch."

Eventually, news came to the dinner table that Dad had received a promotion and the family would be moving four states away. Phoebe was now in ninth grade and would continue high school in the new state, but Simon had an option. After all, he was now in college, with a steady job, and still, a steady girlfriend, Beth. He could go or stay. Despite Phoebe's meager attempts to convince him of new and wonderful opportunities awaiting him, one month after the announcement, he put a security deposit down on a small apartment on Summit Avenue, near the park.

Moving Day arrived, and Phoebe sat on the front stoop watching as Simon's friends tried to fit his bed into the back of Mark Ruff's truck, laughing and cursing, while stony-faced movers hoisted boxes of their old toys and books and clothes on top of the kitchen table, over which they would never gulp mouthfuls of Froot Loops together again. As the furniture was removed, all of their best hide-and-seek places were erased. Gone. She shuddered as she heard her mother tell the men, " Leave that box. It's staying." And when the commotion was over, the home was a naked vault of matted carpet and memories, it was time to leave. Simon hugged them all, blinking back tears and saying he'd see them real soon, and closed the car door after his mother, staring into his sister's tearful gaze from the back seat. She watched him as the car pulled away, getting smaller and smaller, shove his hands into his pockets after a quick wave, and run to his friend's waiting truck. Phoebe began to sob, and at each red light and stop sign, put her hand on the door handle and tried to gauge how far away they were now and if she could run to him safely, before dark. Then they were on the ramp to the Thruway, speeding up, and she had no idea where exactly they were. Simon was left behind. By choice. He was free.


Jodi Pitts
gelatin silver print
Robert Morris

The new home was eerily silent. Mom cried every night for weeks over Simon's absence, and Dad's drinking increased. Phoebe and Jake harshly criticized the smaller school system and foreign small-town mentality of their new peers. And while Jake delved into his schoolwork and became a model student and eager tutor to the "slower kids," Phoebe isolated herself more than ever. She ignored attempts of local kids to befriend her, and was extremely irritable at home, barely speaking to anyone and ready for an argument at the slightest provocation, such as "What are you doing?" from her mother downstairs. She did only the required work in school, preventing both failure and praise. Her new bedroom door had a lock on it, which she used whenever she wasn't at school, or eating dinner.

Simon was the only family member excluded from her new misery. Her heart jumped when the phone rang and she heard her mother sing,"Hi, honey!" And he seemed to listen sympathetically as she would gripe about the new school or lack of "things to do here," but he soon began to castigate her for the behavior Mom had told him about. "Phoebe, don't make this any harder on everyone than it already is," he'd say disdainfully. She was hurt by this authoritative attitude and instantly deflected it. She didn't need chiding, she needed him to hold her as she cried over the absence of ambition in her new life here. And she didn't care about Beth's new car, she wanted to tell him that she needed him here because the new staircase was smaller—you could hear the fucking ice cubes in his glass. She wanted to hear that he was coming to rescue her, take her away from the gloomy new house and bring her home. Yet all she heard was "Jesus, don't you think it's time you grew up?"

He never came to visit without Beth, and Phoebe went out of her way to exacerbate the uneasy feeling of a stranger in the house. She'd coolly request that Simon leave Beth at home while they go for a drive. She'd audibly sigh when waiting for Beth to finish dressing before they were all to go out together. She met all of Simon's glares, hoping his countenance would soon melt into his familiar look when he realized his sister was in pain. Crying inside. Grieving. Her wish was never granted though, and she remembered the icy politeness in his voice as he said goodbye to her at the airport. The wedge was being driven deeper and deeper. After three like visits over the span of a year, he stopped calling for her. If she answered the phone, he'd curtly ask how school was. Fine, how was work? Good, listen I can't talk long is Mom there? Fine. Good. Sad.

Now, years later, it was worse. She was in college in yet another state, with surprisingly good grades and a small circle of friends. Now they went for months without speaking at all. Last Christmas Eve, when Phoebe had no money for a plane ticket and Mom had the flu anyway, Simon announced his engagement to Beth at Grandma's house. Cousin Jennifer told her how nervous he was and that the ring was beautiful. Phoebe called her brother to congratulate him, sickened that her absence didn't prolong such an event, and chilled as she heard her own voice, saying "Congratulations, Simon" in the same tone as when he bought the old used Pontiac from his friend two years ago. Flat. Devoid of feeling. She couldn't fathom how she should sound, though. Would exuberance shock him? Would it sound false? Some time and some place they had lost their own language. Their secret code. Maybe it was when they parted on that cold November afternoon and they couldn't read each other's glances anymore. When his sneaking into her room with a stack of comic books and an illegal plate of cookies could no longer be "I'm sorry." When her bugging him for his records or his kidnapping her dolls could not be "I love you." All they had to use now were words, an unnerving alternative. So they agreed, silently but mutually, that time had definitely stolen something they could never retrieve. They didn't even seem to know what it was, but it was gone.

Some time and some place they had lost their own language. Their secret code.

Last March, during Spring Break, there was a family reunion at their parents' house. After a big dinner and lengthy update on every aunt, uncle, and cousin, pillows and blankets were distributed and the house drifted into a quiet symphony of coughs, whispers, and snores. While Phoebe sat in bed, reading, Simon came into her room.

"Hey," he said, sitting at the foot of her bed.

"What?"

"Nothin', I just wanted to know what you've been doin' lately. How's school?"

"It's okay. I mean, this semester's better than the last one. I'm doing alright. How's work?"

"Well my boss is an asshole, but the money's good, so fuck him. Did you see Beth's ring?"

"Yeah. It's gorgeous. Is it real?" she smirked.

"Oh, you're cute. No, I won it. Ed McMahon bought it for me." They both laughed, then stopped.

A lull.

He got up and started looking at her tapes. "They any good?"

But Phoebe didn't want to talk about music and work and school. She wanted to tell him how badly she wants Beth to like her. She wanted to say she's changed now. She wanted to throw her arms around his neck and cry because she wasn't there for his engagement party. She wanted to tell him she lost her virginity three months ago. She wanted to know if he was truly happy. She wanted to know if he still played Frank Sinatra every Christmas Eve at midnight. If he still wore that red knit hat to bed when it got cold. If he can forgive Dad, now that he goes to A.A. If she should. If he could ever forgive her for not letting him go, but forcing him out.

She wanted to suggest a game of tackle football for tomorrow, but her sudden awareness of the body she now inhabited, a woman's body, betrayed the image she treasured of the way she used to run unabashedly, leaping on her brother's back, squealing with pure joy as he'd still try to run for the touchdown with an eleven-year-old clawing at his sweatshirt.

She'd look ridiculous, she deemed.

So, as her chest pounded and her mind raced with all of these thoughts, she suppressed them, closed the book she held, and yawned.

"Yeah, they're pretty good. I saw them in concert a few months ago. You can borrow it if you want."

"Yeah, maybe I will."

"Well, listen, Simon, I'm exhausted."

"Yeah, me too. We still going out to lunch tomorrow? Where do you wanna go?"

"I don't care. Jake says there's a new place on Hertel he wants to try. It doesn't matter. Will you get the light, please? I don't wanna move."

He walked across the room and told her, "Yeah, one more thing—you better not use up all the hot water tomorrow like you did this morning."

She smiled, and flung one of her stuffed animals at him. She missed.

He clicked the light off and stood at the doorway, almost lingering, with Phoebe looking at the back-lit man in her doorway thinking pleasepleaseplease don't leave. Say something serious and let's talk pleaseplease.

"I'll see you tomorrow, Phoebe," was all he said, though. Then he walked out and softly closed her door.

She sighed, staring at the ceiling, thinking about what had just happened. What was he doing? Was he back? No. Something wasn't right. She felt around under her bed for the stuffed pig she had named "Kitty." She found him, clutched him to her chest and tried to sleep. Well, we tried, Kitty, she thought.

But it wasn't quite right. It was awkward—almost forced . . .

Unnatural . . .

Like a goddamn Picture Day smile.

- Emily Heverin

untitled
solarization print
Joan Lebon

Survival of the Fittest

I am a wall,
And he grows on me like ivy.
He clings to me
In the shadows that I cast;
But his affection is too strong,
It smothers me.
And as I begin to crumble into ruin,
Ruin caused by love,
He continues to live
And remain green
Long after I am dust.
And he will continue to grow
Until he has found another wall
To cling to and destroy.

- Amy R. Hartley

William Tells Time

I shot glances like arrows
Over his head at the apple
Which was the clock;
But my aim was too low,
And I pierced his heart.

- Amy R. Hartley

Somedays Are Missing

He holds my body
in his right hand.
I feel the pressure there
and at first it burned,
and got cold and now
just tingles like needles
in my skin, a place
that has fallen
asleep and is just now
waking up.

- Shannon Varley

The Recluse

Black veil
Covering her eyes
No one knows why
But no one will ask her
Soft pale skin
Covered by death's clothes
She's hiding from her mind
Trying to escape its toll
She cannot sing
Her own voice would scare her
She can't feel the wind blow
Without feeling alone
The people she thought would be there
No longer are beside her
Leaving her in pain
With nothing to do but hide.

- Brant Freeman

Tower of London
color photograph
Dianne Daniels

Competition

The night bled across the sky,
Drowning the day in a pool of black,
Stars mourn the day gone by,
As darkness enjoys the spoils of its attack.
The land soaks in midnight hue,
Grey mingles in the shadows,
And the moonlight casts shades of blue,
While the victorious night silently glows.
At dawn the battle is resumed,
The dark losing to the powerful light,
The night will be completely consumed,
And darkness will wait for the next fight.

- Christopher J. Soucy

Clouds Gray Clouds

The gray heavy clouds, looming
above my fields, are ready,
after collecting the dew from
far away forests, collecting
the mist from far away
towns, collecting the warm moist
breath of my fellow
men, and moving it over
great imposing mountains tipped white with snow,
moving it across wide life-drinking
deserts, to shower down
upon my parching farm
and quench my fading crops
ready for a gulp,
before moving on to grow
gray again.

- Craig Kozlowski

The Devil Smiled at Me

The devil smiled at me,
Holding off the horde of demons,
The devil smiled at me.

The angels wept for me,
Waiting for the priest's sermons,
The angels wept for me.

The stars sing to me,
Tiny lights pointing the way,
The stars sing to me.

God is angered with me,
Waiting for Judgement Day,
God is angered with me.

Some people want to be me,
Immortality coursing through my veins,
Some people want to be me.

Some people are afraid of me,
My soul covered with blood stains,
Some people are afraid of me.

This world is tired of me,
Tired of my cursed destiny,
This world is tired of me.

- Christopher J. Soucy

untitled
gelatin silver print
Vicki Watts

Black

Shadows crossing in the dark
Shade my day, the light
Darkness lurks behind the spark
hidden
Swiftly into darkness
do not be afraid
light a match if you must
it will soon be dark again
I dare you to run . . .
Light a match
Follow me

Shadows crossing in the dark
Shade my day, the light
Darkness lurks behind the spark
hidden
Where's a match?
Where's a spark?
Start to hide in the dark
Darkness lurks behind you
Close your eyes
and make believe
Blow it out
watch light leave
Silence
Darkness
Nothing there
So into nothing you sit and stare.

- Joy Moore

Candle

A burning candle barely illuminating the darkness,
A wan, yellow glow of hollow light.
A single flame sits on top,
gracefully floating atop its sinking throne,
in a pool of liquid memories,
A mirror for the flame to gaze at and into.
Melted drops of hot wax trickle down the sides,
each tracing its path as it freezes in time.
All who look upon the candle
will see how many drops have fallen.
A candle which burns nightly
will reach the bottom quickly,
but one rarely lit has more life
to live in its slowly falling height.

- Anousith Sriratanakoul

1920 Fortune Ave.

Flaking paint,
Splintered rails,
Rotting steps,
Hingeless doors.

Windows broken;
Weeds abound—
Leaking roof,
Shingles missing.

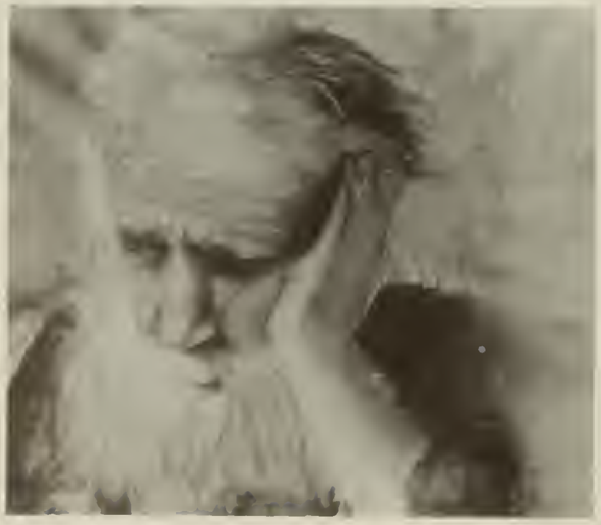
Quiet shadows
look for friends—
Family's left,
Hope is lost.

Laughter rang
Where spiders lurk.
Toys once filled
dusty floors.

Love long gone—
Memories linger.
Life was rich—
Death is stronger.

Abandoned house
once home to many
Cries alone—and sits—
Remembering.

- Charles L. Jonas



untitled
oil pastel
Shawn Kelshaw

The Fox Puppy

          patter   my   feet
The   of   little

                                        can be heard
behind my hiding place
                    and then I   dart for the quick bite
on the
          dangling
                         fingers
                                   hanging
                                             over.
With an
          OUCH!
  and a swipe

I am t   ng o   d
          u   i   v   n   o
            m   l   e   a   v
               b   r   e
                                                        r

snapping at the hand
                    teasing my snout.
I escape to my den.

                              Being slick,

                                             I sneak to my den's other side.

Then on with the game   i
                                                 l   p
                    as the hand grabs and f   s   m
                                                              e.

          GNAW!
BITE!   SCRATCH!
                                                  OUCH!

Finally,
        fooling the hand,

            plaything's back
        my
      on
  hop
I

while he's resting on the floor.
        I SNATCH a big chunk of ear and SHAKE!   SHAKE!
                                                            SHAKE!

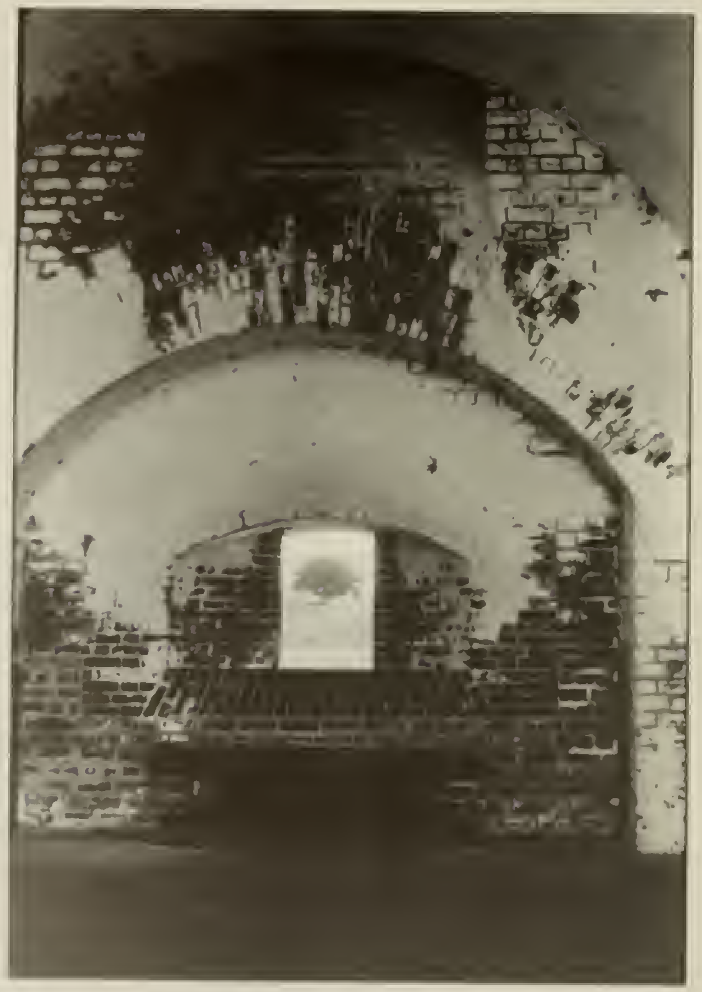
I have won this game.

-*Joey H. McKenzie*

Autumn

The cold yellow flame of the fall hickory,
its triumph over time
heralded by golden flags.
The audience of empty hands
waves a brilliant goodbye,
like so many
drifting home from the party.
To bed, to bed!

- Vance Hanson



untitled
gelatin silver print
Jacquelynn B. Nessmith